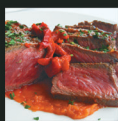




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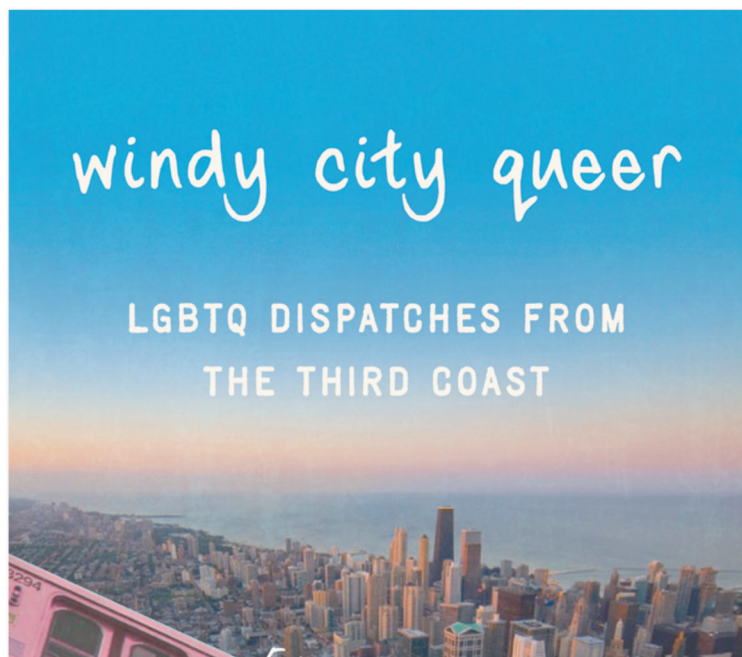
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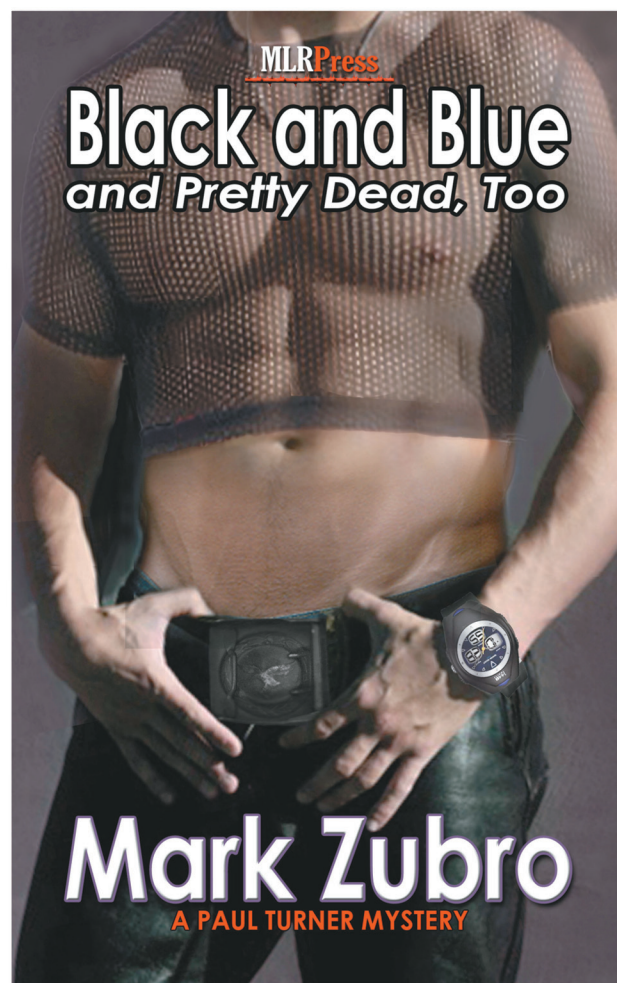
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His book *A Simple Suburban Murder* won the Lambda Literary Award for Best Gay Men's mystery. He taught eighth graders English and reading for thirty-four years. He was president of the teachers' union in his school district from 1985 until 2006. He retired from teaching in 2006 and now spends his time reading, writing, napping, and eating chocolate.

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## OFF THE EATEN PATH



Cold, comfortable Peanut Noodle (left); meringue, whipped cream, berries, and berry coulis of the dessert Pavlova (opposite).

The brainchild of Kindee Thai owners (husband and wife team Nuntanit Charoensit and Kong Tiyawat), Kinsen's stylish bar is perhaps the first thing that customers will notice. Once can't help playing to the bar crowd in Uptown, but it's clear that the focus is on the restaurant's evolving menu—the list of specialty cocktails is relatively small. The wine and beer list is decent if a bit pricey, but happily, one can find either the requisite Tsingtao (\$5) or Sapporo (\$6). For the money, I'd recommend a signature cocktail. We sampled the Too Tem Tea (\$9)—an even more dangerous and drinkable version of the traditional Long Island Iced Tea. For more zip, reach for a Prairie Saint—a kicked-up cosmo with Prairie vodka, St. Germain, lime juice and cranberry juice. It's smoother than it sounds, thanks to the Prairie vodka.

I know the focus here is on the food, it would be lovely to see them play a bit more with house-made infusions and fresh-squeezed juices. Maybe when they get more established as an eatery, the bar will get more attention. The restaurant has only been open for a few months, and the menu is still being tweaked. An early review declared the cuisine too sweet; since then, they're experimenting with a new chef that the manager keeps referring to, quite mysteriously, as "The New Guy." So far, I really like The New Guy.

The New Guy is responsible for a version of Chinese hot pot,





which is as yet, off-menu. The hot pot features the traditional cauldron of spicy hell broth with some noodles on the side to wad up and dip to your heart's content. More side ingredients would make this already winning dish all the more authentic and fun, and I'd personally love to see it on the menu. The New Guy is also responsible for an off-menu coconut crème brûlée that even impressed my dining partner *du jour*, restaurateur and chef Zander Dixon.

Outside of The New Guy's creations, many of Kinsen's original dishes have also received a makeover since opening. The only thing I was served that seemed a tad on the sweet

side was the Curry Triangle appetizer—yam, onion and curry filling folded inside fried spring roll wrappers. It may have just needed a little more onion and curry powder to balance out its accompanying mango chutney, but the concept is sound. That last is coming from a spice nut, so if you favor mild food, you will probably disagree with me.

But if you bat for my team, The Fried Calamari (\$7) is a stunner. Sliced jalapenos and calamari are lightly breaded, then fried, and the texture is quite perfect. It's served with a side of sriracha aioli, but I honestly didn't find that it needed it. In the future, I'd actually love to play with drizzling the calamari with some of the kitchen's spicy condiments selection. If you like heat, please ask your server to bring out the trio to experiment with at your leisure.

Kinsen's noodles are custom-made for their menu, and that degree of care and precision shows. No matter how thin, the noodles stay springy and maintain their bite throughout the meal. Additionally, Kinsen is one of the few Asian restaurants in the Twin Cities area to serve local, natural meats, pleasing both foodies and the environmentally-conscious. May the trend continue.

We sampled the Boat Noodle (\$12) and the broth used for Shrimp Tom Yum (\$14), and found both broths to be assertive, authentic and complex, and the portions satisfying. If you prefer your noodles cold, the Peanut Noodle (\$12) is Asian comfort food at its best, with either chicken or crispy-fried tofu, ramen noodles, cucumber, carrots, radish, sesame seeds and black garlic, tossed in a light peanut sauce.

For dessert, if The New Guy's crème brûlée is not available, opt for charmingly light Pavlova (\$6). Dessert can be a tricky item at Asian restaurants, but I thought this one rounded out the meal very nicely: a bed of swirled meringue, layered with fresh homemade whipped cream, fresh berries and a delicate berry coulis. If you're on a budget, nightly specials are listed at kinsen-noodles.com. My favorite is Movie Mondays, where an app, two entrees and two tickets to any Landmark Theater for just \$35. But even during peak hours, Kinsen provides authentic Asian cuisine at a decent price. □

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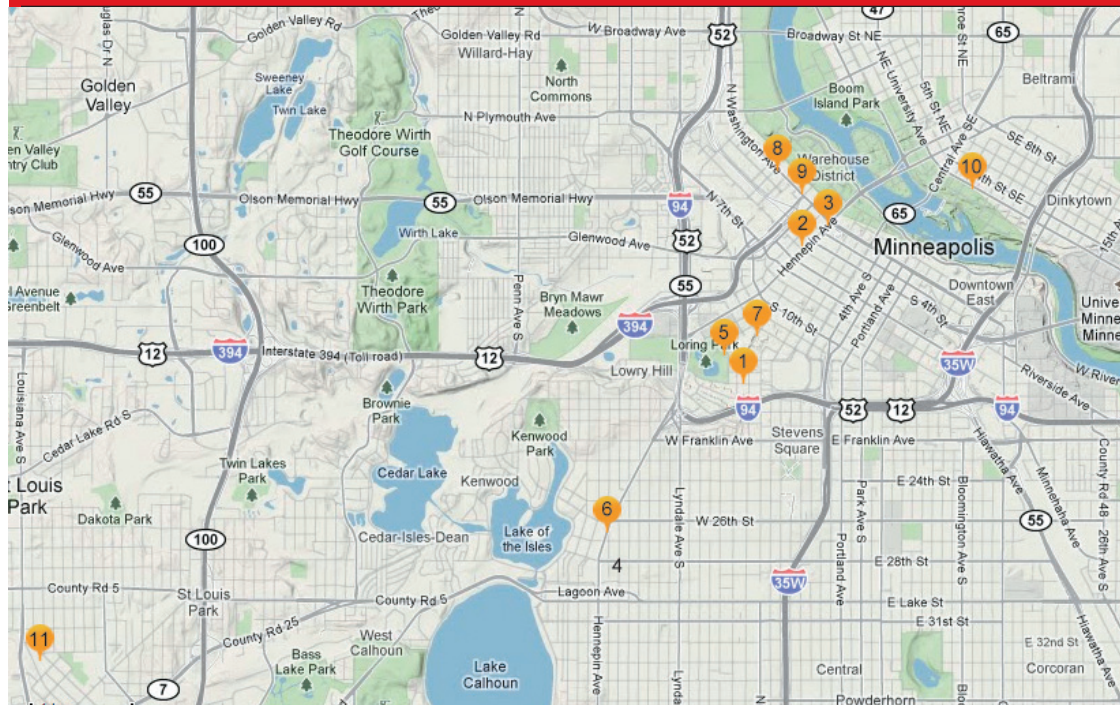
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The Public House is the North Loop neighborhood's newest beer and wine bar, serving a full selection of small plates and entree items. 700 Washington Avenue N., Minneapolis, MN 55401. 612-455-1213. [www.thepublichousempls.com](http://www.thepublichousempls.com)

## 9. TOAST WINE & BAR

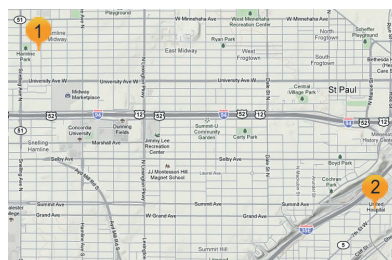
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## FEATURED BARTENDER



by George Holdgrafer



Photo by George Holdgrafer

## WHO

Ryan

## WHAT

Recipe: Arctic Boom  
3/4 oz. Bacardi Arctic Grape  
1/2 oz. Bacardi Grand Melon  
1/2 oz. Sour  
Splash of Lemon-Lime Soda  
Splash of Grenadine

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## SHOWCASE | photos by George Holdgrafer

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# Intruders

SNOW PATROL plays on my laptop as I lather my face for a shave. I'm in my bathroom, alone. The tag on my towel keeps playing with my calf. Instead of tearing it off, I decide to suffer with the itch. Thankfully I keep my towel on—a flood of people pour into my room.

"What the hell are you listening to?! It's Friday night!" the leader of the flamboyant entourage scolds.

Suddenly my bedroom is filled with well-dressed, perfectly annoying gay men. Some of my favorites. They settle on my bed, on my entertainment stand, and on the floor, glasses of wine in tow. My bathroom is open to my bedroom, making escape impossible.

They change Snow Patrol's "On/Off," a song to which I fantasize wonderful, sappy things, to Nicki Minaj's "Super Bass." Always a good song for getting ready.

We chat about what we'll do this evening as I shave and brush my teeth.

I think about what kind of mess they'll leave my place. I'll wake up in the morning with empty bottles, and half-full glasses, of wine

sprinkled throughout my apartment. It'll be a jolly fun time cleaning it up. No, that isn't sarcasm. These people are worth it. They're sassy, classy, and everything in between.

A short while later three of us are outside waiting for Miguel. He's our on-again, off-again driver, the owner of a sexy black Town Car. His rates are only slightly pricier than a cab. And the arrival he guarantees is far more glamorous.

As we wait, a gorgeous group of three girls approaches us. Tippy. They wear cocktail dresses and gregarious costume jewelry. Their hair is big and fashion-forward.

"You boys want to share a cab downtown?" they ask. "Six people in a cab?" one of my friend responds and puffs on his cigarette. The girls smile. What the hell.

We cram into Miguel's car. A pretty brunette in a red dress ends up on my lap in the back seat. She smells delicious. The six of us laugh the entire ride. About wonderful things that don't matter. There are no worries here—just a bunch of well-dressed, perfectly annoying, simply wonderful intruders. ■



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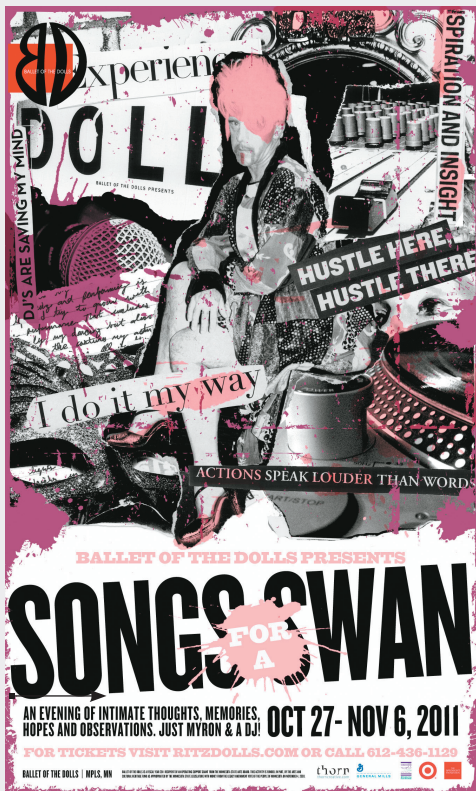
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*Songs for a Swan.* Photo by Thorn Creative

***Songs for a Swan*** — Myron Johnson, the pioneering artistic director of the gender-bending Ballet of the Dolls, has been dancing for 50 years, since age eight. His latest solo work examines his life experience and thoughts that come to him from the vantage point of growing older. He reflects on how experiencing Paris as a young man profoundly impacted him, on growing older, on being gay, on being a showman, and on the loneliness of being an artist. You can expect the unapologetic sexual power the Dolls are known for, something which Johnson says his piece can't not reflect. Johnson observes "There is no way you can put someone out on stage -male or female- and having them move gracefully and beautifully isn't going to be sexual

unless they're trying to be. I've walked out of more dance concerts because the idea of sexuality was feared and trying to be hidden. I can't stand that. Dance is not a sport." To that point, *Songs for a Swan* addresses our preoccupation with analysis, therapy, and what Johnson calls "Overthinking things and trying to get over things. I thought why is it so important for everybody to try and get over something. I don't want to get over anything. I just wanna live it!"

He elucidates "Sexuality, for the good and the bad of it, has always been in my life since I was eight. And so when I do something and someone says to me 'oh my God, that was so out there' or 'that was so sexual', I'm always amazed because I just see that as a part of the whole." When asked about being exposed to sex at such a young age, Johnson replies "30 years ago I would have said something very different than what I do now because I'm on the other side of it. And having sex introduced to you in your life is a trip. It's a trip. Just like being bullied or anything else, you will never be able to not have that be part of your life. I will never be able to have being abused not be a part of my experience. So for me the best way to deal with it was to continue to explore it. And not deny it and not have even a judgment about it because I can have opinions and feelings about whether or not it should have happened. It did. So my only choice is to explore it and figure out what I've learned." Oct. 27 - Nov. 6 • Ritz Theater, 345 13th Av. NE, Mpls. • (763) 436-1129 • [www.ritzdolls.com](http://www.ritzdolls.com)

***Footloose*** — Director Craig Brewer's new version of *Footloose* is gutsy, gritty and glorious. What he calls a "red state, blue state" re-imagining of the 1984 original, has teenaged Bostonian Ren (a magnificent Kenny Wormald) defying a Georgia town ordinance against teenage dancing. That draconian measure was spearheaded by a grieving preacher (a wrenching Dennis Quaid) who snapped into puritanical mental/emotional overdrive when his teenaged son was killed in a car crash after a dance party. For Brewer, rednecks and evangelicals combine their negativity to wreck natural youthful vibrancy. Julianne Hough shines as Ariel, Quaid's suffering daughter. **Now Playing, Area Theaters.**



*Haunted Theatre Fallout.* Photo by Travis Anderson

***Haunted Theatre Fallout*** — The Cuban Missile Crisis re-imagined for Halloween by Live Action Set actors in a building that once served as a fallout shelter is nothing short of inspired. Director Steve Barberio reveals "We're creating a series of experiences that audiences would go through if there was a nuclear war starting while they're here. We take them on journeys through the space that really ignite the imagination. There will be videos from that time -Nikita Krushchev pounding on a table, instructional films on how to avoid looking into the explosion of atomic bombs. You'll experience what it's like to be in a fallout shelter, in the deep bowels of this building, with nuclear explosions going on out on the street." **Through Oct. 31 • Loring Theater, 1407 Nicollet Ave., Mpls. • (612) 353-6781 • [www.loringtheater.com](http://www.loringtheater.com)**



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***Mercy Watson to the Rescue*** — Victoria Stewart's comedy about a married straight couple who treat their pig, Mercy (Sara Richardson) like their child, rather than a pet, is one of the funniest productions of recent years. And if there was ever a Hall of Fame for Most Deliciously Hilarious Old Bitty Performances Ever, then Wendy Lehr as cranky neighbor, Eugenia Lincoln, would have to be inducted. Adapted from Kate DiCamillo's book series with a sumptuous scenic design by Eric Van Wyck. **Through Oct. 23** • Children's Theatre, 2400 Third Av. S., Mpls. • (612) 847-0400 • [www.childrenstheatre.org](http://www.childrenstheatre.org)



*Mercy Watson to the Rescue*. Photo by Dan Norman

***Absentee Landlord*** — John Waters made his mark a generation ago with indie films that were intentionally vulgar, campy, and often drag-driven. Recall his fabulous leading lady, Divine. In 2011 the Walker Art Center has let him choose from their permanent collection his personal favorites to curate his own exhibit. From images of UFOs in D.C., to women and apes getting overly friendly, to a film of a McDonalds restaurant being flooded with water, it's all whimsically mischievous. **Ongoing** • Walker Art Center, 1750 Hennepin Av., Mpls. • (612) 375-7600 • [www.walkerart.org](http://www.walkerart.org)



*Oliver Twist*. Photo by Petronella Ytsma

***Oliver Twist*** — Neil Bartlett is loved for his sense of gay history in his fiction (*Skin Lane*) and for adapting classic European plays (Genet's *Splendids*). He combines gay sensibility with a sense of history and a social consciousness. Director Joel Sass calls his adaptation of the Dickens classic "a stage equivalent of a thrilling page-turner. Dickens wrote with incredible empathy about the heroism and tragedy of ordinary lives. Neil Bartlett reclaims Dickens as a modern author." **Through Nov. 6** • Park Square Theatre, 20 W. 7th PL., St. Paul • (651) 291-7005 • [www.parksquaretheatre.org](http://www.parksquaretheatre.org)

***Much Ado About Nothing*** — We're accustomed to stories about young people falling in love. But William Shakespeare's 1598 comedy concerns falling in love reluctantly well past youth for the very first time. Call Beatrice and Benedick's ultimate cohesion a 'marriage of minds' played out by Dhearballa Molloy and Daniel Gerroll. *Much Ado* also hits hard with the bard's anti-patriarchal commentary on the mandate for female virginity, not to mention homoerotic undercurrents affecting the character, Don John (Ron Menzel). **Through Nov. 5** • Guthrie Theater, 818 S. 2nd St., Mpls. • (612) 377-2224 • [www.guthrietheater.org](http://www.guthrietheater.org)

***Lysistrata*** — Aritsophanes looms as the great comic playwright of ancient Greece. His most popular work is about wives so fed up with husbands being away at war for so long, they decide to refuse to have sex with them until they come home and stay home. Obie-winner Maxine Klein directs with a set design by Kathy Stewart that will reflect the ravaged infrastructure of a country that's channeled its funds to war instead of home. **Oct. 26-29** • Whitney Fine Arts Center, 1424 Yale Pl., MCTC • (612) 659- 6118 • [www.minneapolis.edu](http://www.minneapolis.edu)



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PLUS MEL BROOKS' YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN:  
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JOANNA JAHN JOHN TRONES JEN BURLEIGH-BENTZ

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Joanna Jahn, John Trones and Jen Burleigh-Bentz, vocalists



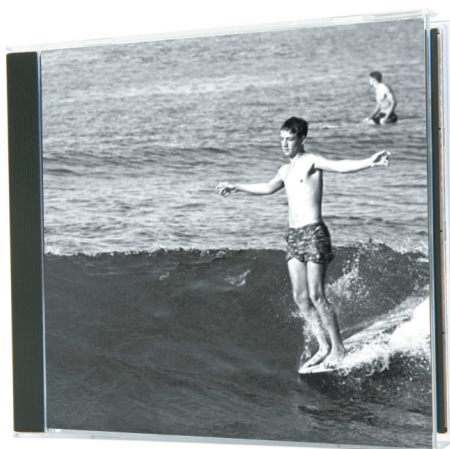
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### → **THE RAPTURE** *IN THE GRACE OF YOUR LOVE*

The Rapture have been absent from the dance music scene for a relative geologic age – five years – but make a game try on their fourth album. It's an odd collection that doesn't quite bring a set of diffuse elements together. Give the band some credit for ambition as they dig into as many sounds as their tracks here, from pulsing dance music to sweeping ballads to a bit of slow-burn indie rock for the end. The playing is solid from beginning ("Sail Away," which wouldn't sound out of place on a Waterboys album) until the end, led by Luke Jenner's powerful vocals, but all of the genre hopping eventually left me exhausted. A little focus would have taken the album into a much better world.



### **PETER WOLF CRIER** *GARDEN OF ARMS*

The local duo grows on their sophomore release, without losing all of the simplicity that brought them national attention a couple of years back. The arrangements and instrumentation are more complex, providing more aural texture to hook and reel in the listener. Peter Pisano and Brian Moen have the unconscious understanding of all great collaborators, crafting seamless compositions out of sometimes divergent pieces. Underneath it all – the synth-driven "Hard Heart" to relative sonic assault of "Beach" to the more Spartan "Cut a Hand" – the familiar tone is there. Peter Wolf Crier makes music fit for a Minnesota winter, and while that (hopefully) is still a ways off, that vibe – of spare landscapes, long dark nights and isolation beneath layers of warm clothes – is ever present.



### **STEPHIN MERRITT** *OBSCURITIES*

Drawn from the wide reaches of his catalogue, from main group the Magnetic Fields to side groups like the Gothic Archies and the 6ths, *Obscurities* is just that – 14 oddball tracks from an oft oddball artist. To be honest, if you are not a fan, this is not the place to start. Merritt lets his eccentricities out on these tunes, be it a love for the cold dance music of early New Order or a 7-inch version of standout cut "I Don't Believe You" that sounds like it has been rerecorded by the 1994 version of Pavement. Longtime fans, however, will find some delights, including the aforementioned tracks, not to mention the low-fi surf stomp of "Beach a Boop-Boop" or the crazed beauty of "Take Ecstasy With Me."



### **DAVID GUETTA** *NOTHING BUT THE BEAT*

The French DJ teams up with plenty of artists of the moment, from Jennifer Hudson to Usher to Lil' Wayne on his fifth album, his first since the breakout success of *One Love*. It ends up being pretty much what you would expect – a breathless, driving collection of tunes that will likely play well in the clubs and isn't entirely disposable as a set of tunes to listen to at your leisure. Pure dance albums rarely make for the best household listening – maybe best for cleaning the closets – but, as the title promises, the beat is up front throughout, no matter who sings. An instrumental bonus disc proves to be more interesting, with the spare tunes shining through without the interference from current pop stars.



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Photos by Sophia Hantzes

## CONGRATULATIONS TO THE MINNESOTA LYNX: WORLD CHAMPIONS

It took only three games to do it, but it took years of hard work to get there. The Minnesota Lynx made history when they beat the Atlanta Dream 73-67 on October 7, 2011. We want to both congratulate everyone involved with the team as well as offer our thanks—it was a fantastic season.

Minnesota loves Los Lynx!

#1 - Jessica Adair (C), #33 - Seimone Augustus (G-F), #32 - Rebekkah Brunson (F), #6 - Amber Harris (F), #14 - Alexis Hornbuckle (G), #24 - Charde Houston (F), #8 - Taj McWilliams-Franklin (F-C), #23 - Maya Moore (F), #13 - Lindsay Whalen (G), #11 - Candice Wiggins (G), #22 - Monica Wright (G-F).

HEAD COACH: Cheryl Reeve - ASSISTANT COACHES: Jim Petersen and Shelley Patterson  
ATHLETIC TRAINER: Chuck Barta - ASSISTANT TRAINER: Keith Uzpen









## A Beginning and an Ending

TWO LOCAL leather/BDSM events with similar names, held the same September weekend, represented a beginning and an ending.

The beginning: the first Northern Lights (and Kinky Nights) regional BDSM education weekend was held in St. Paul. The weekend included 24 educational seminars, a vendor area, two nights of dungeon/play-space action, and a silent auction benefiting the National Coalition for Sexual Freedom (NCSF). The creation of the Northern Lights weekend was inspired by Leather Leadership

Conference (LLC) XI which was held in Minneapolis in 2007 and on which many of the Northern Lights organizers worked. The aim of the Northern Lights organiza-

tion is "to bring the best of Minnesota to the world and the best of the kink world to Minnesota." Apparently the event's organizers succeeded in their goal; organizers felt the event "went really, really well." Survey feedback from attendees was good, vendors said they'd be back next year, and presenters were pleased with how the event was run. Northern Lights drew over 230 attendees from the region (Minnesota, North Dakota, and Iowa) and presenters from Chicago, Boston and Denver.

The ending: Minnesota Storm Patrol's third Northern Xposure run apparently will be the club's last. The theme of this year's run was Totally Twisted Fairy Tales, and the run also incorporated the fall meeting of the Mid-America Conference of Clubs. In

addition, the Atons of Minneapolis supported the run by making its banquet the venue for their monthly Leather/Levi Dinner. At the run's Sunday morning brunch the announcement was made that, now that the Minnesota Storm Patrol had presented its run, the club would start the process of dissolving itself. Many questions remain, such as whether some Minnesota Storm Patrol members will seek to join other existing clubs or whether a new club will be started. Until such time as all arrangements for the club's dissolution are made, the Minnesota Storm Patrol will continue holding their monthly beer busts at The Town House in St. Paul. And watch for details on a possible last Minnesota Storm Patrol bar event, at which the club's colors will be retired. □



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# Of History and Religion: Raise Your Voice

AS WE approach on the ballot measure in November 2012, we will begin to hear “Christian” voices in support of a constitutional amendment against same-sex marriage. These voices seem inescapable and indefatigable. Yet, as an openly partnered queer woman and a student at Luther Seminary pursuing ordination, I know that these are not the only voices rising up in the church today.

As a result of many brave men and women who have gone before me, I am able to be a candidate for ordination in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America. After nearly twenty years of discussion, the ELCA voted in the summer of 2009 to allow individual churches and regions, as they felt moved, to call pastors in “publicly accountable lifelong monogamous same-gender relationships.” Other “mainline Protestant” denominations – specifically Episcopal, United Church of Christ, and Presbyterian – have been through similar processes to remove barriers to the ordination of gay and lesbian people. (The largest mainline Protestant denomination, the United Methodist Church, does not allow the ordination of openly gay and lesbian pastors, and has also been discussing the issue for some time.)

There is still a great deal of struggle in the church, even after the policy transformations that have taken place. Many people and pastors cannot (or will not) understand what has happened and have elected to leave their particular churches or denominations. Debate continues – and not always civilly. Yet there is also a great deal of celebration. Many people and pastors are coming forward to rejoice in the long-awaited recognition of partnered gay and lesbian people as children of God, loved and accepted unconditionally. My partner and I, the congregation where we worship, and many of my fellow students at the seminary are among those who



daily celebrate how far the church has come.

We have not come this far by votes and debates alone. We are where we are today because of the courage of people throughout the church who raised voices and questions that challenged and strengthened us.

Some of those voices raised the question of *biblical authority*. For much of the church’s history, we treated the Bible as a book with a single author (usually God), which spoke to us plainly no matter where we were in space or time. It is in recent centuries that academics and scholars in the church have awoken us to how far we are from the original setting of the Bible – culturally, geographically, racially, historically, even religiously. What came to be called “historical criticism” attempted to reconstruct the context in which the books – plural – of the Bible came to be. For many, understanding the teaching of the books – plural – of the Bible in their first context brought the lessons in those books into greater clarity. The creation stories became not a scientific and historical record but songs of praise to the beautiful work of God’s hand. The laws and commandments given in Exodus, Numbers, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy became not a way to cast out the “unclean” but a collection of guidelines for keeping a community “clean”, set apart from other religions who worship other gods. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John became not four voices to the same story, but four authors of four distinct stories offering different windows on the person of Jesus Christ. For many, historical criticism brought the Bible from an untouchable and condemning pedestal into our own hands where the stories of struggling to know what it means to be “God’s people” became a living and nourishing witness to our own story.

Some of those questions came from *the perspective of the oppressed*. In the twentieth century, national and global voices raised





[MN]Love Photo Collection: Rochester Pride, Margie W. & Jo E. (Placement does not indicate relationship to editorial content on page.)  
Photo by Simon Scott Stromberg Photography

questions about institutional oppression within the hierarchy of the church. Social injustice and the inequality, poverty, and cruelty it sowed was challenged. *No*, said voices from colonized countries in South America, Africa, and Asia; *No*, said voices of African-American and Latino-American church leaders; *No*, said voices of women across the church. A Savior born to a working-class family, who ministered to fishermen and spoke about farms, who died at the hands of religious authorities and political regimes – this Savior did not come to establish a church of injustice. From these perspectives grew liberation theologies and feminist theologies, speaking from and for the perspective of the oppressed, looking to Christ not only to save us from our individual sin but from the institutional sin that bound us to hurt and oppress one another.

But the most important questions came from the witness of *ordinary people*. This has been the biggest challenge to the church: when its children, baptized and raised and loved by many, step forward and speak their truth. The bold witness of the queer children of God has been the transformation of the church. Each church, both individual congregations and gathered denominations, has wrestled with these beloved children, the Sunday School teachers and secretaries and musicians and potluck coordinators who stepped forward

and said: “This is who I am.” Each church has asked: “How do we hear this witness, the voices of the people we love speaking out against hate? How do we understand the experience of our queer brothers and sisters in the face of years of tradition?”

We still have a long way to go, and there are days and weeks when we are weary of the journey. When our voices of celebration are mixed with voices of condemnation, when two sets of hands open the same holy Book and see two very different images of God, it may seem that we have not come very far at all. The constitutional amendment looms before us, and varied voices from the church rise up. Our own voices are strained after years and decades of calling for justice, for equality, for the right to the pursuit of happiness. And it has been those voices, weary and worn, that have changed the church. It is the bold witness of the queer children of God, their proclamation of the truth of God’s love for them, that has brought us here, to this place, where we might be able to dream of a world where despair can be conquered by hope, where lies can be consumed by truth, where hate can be overcome by love.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. ■





# THE ROAD TO ELECTION 2012

It's time to get our Politics on. *Lavender* is more than just a pretty face—we've got substance, too. And, we're making sure that people we ask questions of our political parties here in Minnesota so that we can be as informed as we can be during this upcoming election. Representing the five most recognized parties: Ken Martin, Minnesota Democratic-Farm-Labor Party (DFL) Chair; Tony Sutton, Republican Party of Minnesota (MN GOP) Chair; Mark Jenkins, Independence Party of Minnesota Chair; Andy Hammerlinck for the Green Party of Minnesota; and S. L. Malleck, Libertarian Party of Minnesota Vice Chair.

## We're looking ahead to Election 2012, but there's still an Election to happen in a few weeks. What should we expect to happen on November 8, 2011?

### **DFL:**

As property taxes rise, people across the state will be reminded of the GOP budget that chose to protect the richest 7,700 Minnesotans and raise taxes on all Minnesotans. Governor Mark Dayton and the DFL legislators will continue to work for all Minnesotans through legislation that represents the values and interests of our state. Our DFL leaders have and will continue to invest in new technologies that will create jobs, strengthen our education system and work to improve our state's economy.

### **GOP:**

We expect that denied a tax increase in 2011, Gov. Dayton will be even more obsessed with his "tax the rich" approach to a structural budget crisis. As was the case in 2011, we expect the Democrats will give lip service to supporting the governor and will run away from huge tax increases the governor will likely propose. Democrats will continue to propose more programs and more government spending without a way to pay for either. We expect Republican legislators, more comfortable with their majority status, to make even bolder structural reforms to state government. Look for the Republican Legislature to mitigate the negative affects of federal program like the "Affordable Care Act" on people in Minnesota.

### **Independence:**

The Republicans and Democrats will continue to blame the State's budget compromise, sluggish economy, high unemployment, and every other ill they can imagine on each other. They will frame the 2012 election around the failings caused by the other Party as opposed to the solutions that they should be bringing forward themselves.

The public's frustration with politics as usual will continue to

drive reasonable Republicans and practical progressives towards the Independence Party and its advocacy for innovative solutions and real reform. The majority of Minnesotans who do not identify with any particular party will be looking for smart, articulate and "Minnesota first" style leadership in the state legislature.

The Independence Party will continue to recruit and promote these types of candidates, as we have for 20 years. And we will make winning seats in the Minnesota state legislature our number one priority.

### **Green:**

Besides the presidential contest, the highest profile issue on the ballot next year will be the so-called "marriage amendment." Minnesota will lead the nation by being the first state whose people explicitly reject the bigotry that this amendment is attempting to bring to our state. It will take a powerful grassroots movement, but it can - and must - be done. 2012 will be a landmark year for Civil Rights in our state.

### **Libertarian:**

With the Democrats and Republicans dominating the legislature, the public will continue to endure divisive debates on the marriage amendment, stadium proposals, the state budget, and almost every other issue. Whether the Republicans remain in control at the Capitol or if Democrats regain it, it will not make a long-term difference. Taxes, spending, and debt will continue to increase, causing a gradual decline in the standard of living for many Minnesotans, and more laws will be passed to micro-manage our lives, catching more people in the crosshairs of government.

We are calling for people to investigate our philosophy and to consider running for local and state office as Libertarians in the 2012 election, so that more of the public can be offered a fresh perspective and new solutions.



# DFL

**Job Creation.** President Obama has proposed the American Jobs Act that includes investments in education and infrastructure that will not only put thousands of Minnesotans and Americans back to work but improve America's schools, bridges, roads and public buildings. We support new and creative ways to put Minnesotans back to work, which is exactly what Governor Dayton and President Obama are working to do.

**Economy.** Our economy is directly affected by our country's ability to create jobs. The DFL stands behind President Obama's American Jobs Act that will put thousands of Minnesotans back to work by investing in infrastructure and education. The plan also includes a payroll tax cut that will put money back in the pockets of America's middle class. The DFL will continue to support Governor Dayton and the DFL legislators, who have been touring the state looking for new ways to put Minnesotans back to work.

**Defeating the Marriage Ban Amendment.** The DFL is working with the campaign Minnesotans United for All Families to help coordinate efforts to defeat the anti-marriage amendment. The Party stands for equality and fairness and we are working hard to help coordinate a grassroots campaign that will ensure the discriminatory amendment is defeated in 2012.

**Education.** The DFL believes that our schools must be adequately funded to provide our children with the necessary tools and resources to succeed. The future of Minnesota is dependent on our priorities and education is one of the top priorities. Minnesota attracts employers because of our strong education infrastructure and we must continue to fund our education system to maintain our strong workforce.

**State Budget.** Governor Dayton proposed a responsible, fair and honest solution to our state budget that included both cuts and additional revenue. The DFL will continue to support legislation that protects middle-class Minnesotans in a fair and balanced way. We will work for new budget solutions that do not borrow money from our schools and local governments. The DFL supports Governor Dayton's proposal to make the richest Minnesotans pay their fair share so we can continue to adequately fund education, hospitals and our local governments.

# GOP

**Private Sector Job Growth.** Government cannot create jobs. Jobs are created by a growing and prosperous economy. Economic growth precedes job creation. "Economic growth" is the result of productivity increases in the private sector. This is achieved by reducing taxation and excessive regulation, which frees businesses to innovate and produce more for less. In turn that lowers prices, creates a real demand for labor that raises wages and creates new wealth that sustains further economic growth.

**Eliminate Excessive Regulation.** Excessive government regulation is a hidden tax that hurts all Minnesotans through higher prices for goods and services and lower wages. Understand there are two types of legitimate regulation that protects public safety and prevents force and fraud. Regulations that interfere with the ability of people to voluntarily conduct business, on the other hand, are beyond the scope of government and effectively destroy jobs and economic growth.

**Right to Work.** By definition, the purpose of unions is to raise wage levels and benefit packages above what employers would pay in an open market. Unions are a good deal for members that benefit from higher wages and greater benefits, but economic principle always prevails - paying some people an artificially high wage necessarily means higher prices for products and fewer available jobs. Right to work laws, which enable a person to work at a "union shop" without having to join a union, opens new jobs, especially at entry-level positions. Right to work is both an economic and a moral issue.

**Redistricting.** There is no more important issue facing Minnesota than redrawing legislative and congressional district lines to ensure the principle of "one person, one vote." Redistricting based on geographic lines and divisions captures the essence of a whole community and is the only objective and fair way to ensure "one person, one vote."

**Structural Reform of Government.** Media reporting during the last legislative session focused on the debate over the size of the budget. Lost in that perspective were significant structural reforms made by the legislature. Minnesota has a spending problem, not a revenue problem, but the spending problem has a deeper root cause - the scope of state government far exceeds its constitutional authority.

# IND

**Social Reform.** We have become active partners with Minnesotans United for All Families. Our advocacy includes hosting Minnesotans United at IP events, sharing the importance of this effort with our members and spreading the message to the public through candidates and other public media opportunities.

**Political Reform.** The Independence Party has been a partner of Fair Vote Minnesota for several years and we are proud to continue that support in the hope that all Minnesota elections use Instant Runoff Voting (IRV), also known as Ranked Choice Voting (RCV), sooner than later. As with Minnesotans United, we host Fair Vote Minnesota at IP events, advocate for this important reform with our members and share our support with the public through our candidates and several other outreach opportunities.

**Fiscal Reform.** This issue is the newest of our three primary issue advocacy initiatives. We are currently exploring partnerships with organizations that share our belief in true fiscal responsibility. During the last legislative session, and through the state government shutdown, the IP was very vocal about the need for real budget reform. We spoke against the mutually exclusive positions of "tax the rich" and "cut taxes" that came from the other two major parties. And we fiercely opposed the so-called "compromise" that only kicked the state's budget mess to the next legislative session through increased borrowing.

# GR

**Financial Crisis. Tax the Rich!** The United States needs a progressive income tax and corporations need to pay their fair share, too. We will be standing with the protesters who Occupy Wall Street and Minneapolis.

**Bringing a Green New Deal to the U.S.** The way to bring sustainable jobs to this country is through a massive investment in public infrastructure, training, and technology that is environmentally focused.

**Ending the Wars in the Middle East.** The money we spend on war is desperately needed here at home, for jobs, housing, public works projects, and much more. We will continue to protest against the wars in the Middle East, and to call on the President and Congress to bring our troops home.

**Stop Obama's Resurrection of Nuclear Power.** In the wake of the Fukushima Daiichi disaster, we need to follow Germany's lead and get serious about transitioning away from nuclear energy completely. Greens are actively educating the public on a "No Nukes!" tour throughout the country right now.

**Ensure Civil Rights for All.** Minnesota is the battleground for Civil Rights in 2012 and we will be full participants in fighting against the "marriage amendment," and for equality for all Minnesotans.

# LIB

**Gay Marriage.** Build support for defeating the constitutional gay marriage ban, as well as encouraging repeal of the existing statutory gay marriage ban. Libertarians seek to end the government's involvement in all personal affairs, allowing each individual to live their own lives as they choose.

**Propose alternatives to corporate welfare and social welfare.** Republicans often claim that failing businesses need government support, now including outright taxpayer bailouts, to failing businesses. By contrast, Libertarians believe that inefficient businesses should be allowed to fail, making room for upstart entrepreneurs to take their place. Similarly, Democrats often claim the importance of giving government support to those in need, such as the poor. By contrast, Libertarians understand that some individuals do need a helping hand from time to time, but realize that charitable donors and caring volunteers do a better job of determining legitimate need and addressing those needs, than bureaucratic welfare programs which only lead to dependency rather than self-sufficiency.

**End War on Drugs.** Build support for ending the War on Drugs. Drug Prohibition has been a decades-long failure, leading to increased crime and violence, more dangerous and addictive drugs being developed, and skyrocketing imprisonments, all without stemming the flow of drugs or preventing their consumption. Even patients for whom marijuana is the only remedy are prevented from using it.

**Foreign Wars.** Draw attention to the injustice of our foreign wars. Not only has US military involvement overseas cost tremendous sums of money, it has led to the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Americans and foreigners alike, and is also the root cause of terrorism.

**Finance and Money.** Draw attention to the problems with our financial and monetary system. Decades ago, the Federal Reserve was given a monopoly on creating the nation's money supply. They have gravely mismanaged that responsibility, whipsawing the economy with numerous boom and bust cycles, leading to bankruptcies of business owners and devaluation of workers' savings through inflation. Ending the Fed's monopoly and returning to sound money, most likely backed by gold, would end politically-based manipulation of interest rates, lead to a stable economy, and ensure that peoples' earnings retain their value and purchasing power.







## What do you predict will happen in the time before Election 2012 on a national level?

### **DFL:**

President Obama will continue to stand with consumers and middle class Americans by fighting for job creating legislation. The American Jobs Act is just one example of President Obama's efforts to turn our economy around. The strength of our economy and the demand for jobs will be a critical issue at both the state and federal level. I hope our country and elected officials will do what is best for our country and pass the American Jobs Act so our country can move forward by creating jobs and investing in our most important asset, education.

### **GOP:**

It is apparent that President Obama is following a playbook similar to Gov. Dayton in Minnesota. The president is pushing a populist, class warfare "tax the rich" agenda without offering any economic argument as to how taking capital out of productive use and redistributing it through government will increase economic growth and produce a net increase in jobs. The more the president pushes his approach, the longer it will take the economy to recover. We do not expect real economic growth prior to the 2012 election, and we expect the election to be a referendum on President Obama's mishandling of the economy. The election - state as well as national - will be a referendum on President Obama and the Democrat Party.

### **Independence:**

While the Independence Party of Minnesota is focused primarily on state issues, Minnesota has proven to be a bellwether state when it comes to national politics and economy. Minnesotans have grown frustrated with government and the economy just as citizens throughout the country have. Politics at the national level is just as divisive and partisan as it is in Minnesota. Partisan paralysis in Minnesota and Washington, D.C. has led to a government shutdown in Minnesota and three close calls in D.C. in just the past 4 months.

There are different groups developing throughout the country such as No Labels and Americans Elect that

reflect citizens' growing frustrations. Our prediction is that Americans will continue to grow increasingly active in these principled movements away from the orthodoxy of the Democratic and Republican parties. Ultimately America will benefit from a greater diversity of voices in our political process as well as an increased spirit of collaboration and innovation.

### **Green:**

The Occupy Wall Street movement will have a significant and far reaching impact on changing the conversation in Washington and all over the country. Significant social change is always led by the people, not politicians. The people have been fed up with politicians who support Wall St. over Main St. for quite some time, and this powerful movement's impact will be felt in 2012 as it is now.

### **Libertarian:**

As on the state level, issues at the federal level will also remain intractable with Democrats and Republicans holding a monopoly on political power. Whether the Republicans keep their majority in Congress or lose it to the Democrats, it will not make a significant difference, just as the election of President Obama and Democratic majorities in Congress in 2008 didn't end the wars in the Middle East, stop taxpayer-funded bailouts to major corporations, end the federal government's prosecution of peaceful marijuana consumers, or lead to the repeal of the anti-gay Defense Of Marriage Act.

However, Ron Paul's campaign in the 2012 Presidential race is allowing libertarian ideas to become more widely introduced to the public. His standing continues to grow as he is attracting the support of Libertarians as well as disaffected Democrats and Republicans. As a long-time advocate of ending the wars in the Middle East and many other principled positions, even when those positions were unpopular, we believe he can be trusted to enact these stances if elected. Whether he wins or not, his efforts are helping to build support for the libertarian movement.





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## Who To Watch on the Way to Election 2012

### **President Barack**

**Obama:** Our President was influential in the repeal of DADT. He has been a tireless leader in the fight for equal rights and working for the middle class. President Obama proposed the American Jobs Act which will put Americans back to work and get our nation's economy moving again. (DFL)

### **Kurt Zellers and Amy**

**Koch:** Their job is to maintain these majorities, prove they were not a fluke and advance Reform 2.0. (GOP)

### **Tom Horner:**

Horner earned the votes of a quarter-million Minnesotans and continues to maintain a respected platform as a voice for innovation and intelligent solutions to the challenges our state government faces. (Ind.)

**Cam Gordon:** Gordon is a Minneapolis City

Council Member and a model local legislator who is committed to citizen participation. (Green)

**Ron Paul:** Paul is the most well-known libertarian, although he's chosen to run under the Republican banner as the best way to gain media coverage. (Lib.)

**Senator Amy Klobuchar:** Senator Klobuchar faces re-election in 2012. She has been a leader in consumer-advocacy for our state and is critical that our state sends Senator Klobuchar back to Washington. (DFL)

**Chip Cravaack:** His reelection in 2012 will validate that the 8th District vote in 2010 was a real move to the right and a vote for change. (GOP)

**Richard Carlbom:** Carlbom comes to the Minnesotans United for All Families campaign with a strong DFL background

but will be tasked with (and is equipped for) leadership of a politically diverse coalition. He will prove we can all work together. (Ind.)

**Jill Stein:** Stein is a Massachusetts physician and potential Green Party candidate for President in 2012. (Green)

**John Stossel,** investigative journalist. (Lib.)

**Senator Tom Bakk & Representative Paul Thissen:** The DFL Caucus leadership continue to work for legislation that creates jobs and stand firm against a divisive social agenda that attacks human rights. (DFL)

**Tea Party:** The Tea Party shares the GOP's conservative principles, but sometimes differs on policy. At the grassroots level, the Tea Party and GOP coming together makes each organization stronger. (GOP)

**John Kriesel:** Kriesel was certainly someone to watch in 2011. The IP may not share all his policy beliefs, but his willingness to put Minnesota before the GOP should be applauded. (Ind.)

**Elizabeth May:** May is the first ever Green MP in Canada and was elected in 2011. (Green)

**Ian Freeman.** Freeman is a civil disobedience activist and host of the libertarian talk radio program Free Talk Live. (Lib.) □







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# "HOLDING OUT FOR A HERO"

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by Terrance Griep



OUR FANTASTIC FANATIC IS GOING TO MEET ALL KINDS OF DISTRACTION IN THIS AGE OF INSTANT INTERNET POLLS AND CONSTANT FOCUS GROUPING, WHERE EVERYTHING, FROM LAPEL PIN CHOICE TO HAIRSTYLE IS HYPER-ANALYZED. MUCH OF THIS FEEDBACK WILL ORIGINATE FROM POLITICAL OPPONENTS; SOME OF IT WILL BE FROM SUPPOSED ALLIES--LOBBYISTS, HOBBYISTS, CAREERISTS, AND PORKBARRELISTS--WHO SEEK TO BEND OUR FANTASTIC FANATIC TO THEIR UNWHOLESOME WILL. UNFORTUNATELY FOR MINNESOTA'S 38TH GOVERNOR, WHEN HE MET WITH SUCH FORCES, HIS ADMINISTRATIVE DIFFICULTIES WERE CATALYZED BY HIS NOTORIOUSLY THIN SKIN. OUR FANTASTIC FANATIC MUST THEREFORE ARMOR HIMSELF WITH THE METAMORPHIC EPIDERMIS OF THE THING.

ONE CERTAINTY ABOUT CHANGING THE POLITICAL SYSTEM IS THAT IT WILL RESOLUTELY CHANGE THE CHANGER, SO OUR FANTASTIC FANATIC WILL NEED TO BE FLEXIBLE, THE REASON D'ETRE OF MISTER FANTASTIC. THIS PROTEAN SYMBIOSIS IS PERFECTLY EMBODIED BY THE FIFTH DISTRICT'S REPRESENTATIVE KEITH ELLISON. IN THE POPULAR CONSCIOUSNESS, HE RESHAPED HIS CORNER OF THE HOUSE BY BECOMING THE FIRST PRACTICING MUSLIM TO ASSUME SUCH AN OFFICE AND THE FIRST AFRICAN AMERICAN SENT THERE FROM MINNESOTA. THIS VISTA LENDS ELLISON A SPECIAL PERSPEC-

ILLUSTRATION: JIMMY KIM

THE WIDE DEBATING CLIM--DEBATING WANNABE



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VENTURA'S WATERLOO.

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-IS CAPITAL. USING THE PARALLEL STRETCH POWERS OF  
MISTER ELLISON AND MISTER FANTASTIC, THE  
FANTASTIC FANATIC WILL BE ABLE TO GO TO ANY  
LENGTHS TO AFFECT CHANGE.



**THE HUMAN  
TORCH**  
SENATOR  
AL FRANKEN

OUR FANTASTIC FANATIC  
WILL HAVE TO GENERATE AN ANFUL LOT  
OF ENERGY TO MAKE HER POLITICAL WILL  
MANIFEST. FOR THAT, WE CALL UPON THE FIERY  
TEMPERAMENT OF MINNESOTA'S JUNIOR SENATOR.  
THAT SAME IRASCIBILITY WAS WIELDED AGAINST HIM  
DURING THE CAMPAIGN AS QUESTIONS OF HIS "FIT-  
NESS FOR OFFICE" WERE RAISED AND RE-RAISED, BUT,  
AS AN ENERGETIC SENATOR, FRANKEN HAS PARLAYED  
THAT SAME VIGOR INTO THE CHAMPIONING OF SEVERAL  
MAJOR INITIATIVES, NOT THE LEAST OF WHICH WAS  
HEALTH INSURANCE MANDATES MEANT TO CURTAIL  
SUPERVILLANOUS BUSINESS PRACTICES. THUSLY  
WE GRANT OUR FANTASTIC FANATIC THE FIRE  
POWER OF THE HUMAN TORCH.

MOONING OVER A FANTASTIC FANATIC DEDICATED TO THE WELL-BEING OF THE CONSTITUENCY AND  
ONLY THE WELL-BEING OF THE CONSTITUENCY IS A PLEASANT DIVERSION---THAT CHARACTER, ALAS, IS  
JUST AS FICTIONAL AS THE SUPER-HEROES WHO PARENTED HER. BUT DEMOCRACY IS A FUNNY  
THING: IF CAN'T VOTE FOR THE FANTASTIC FANATIC, PERHAPS YOU CAN INSTEAD BECOME HER.

The Fantastic Four, The Human Torch, Invisible Woman, Mister Fantastic, and the Thing are TM and (c) Marvel Entertainment 2011.



**THE  
INVISIBLE  
WOMAN**  
REPRESENTATIVE  
MICHELE BACHMANN

IF OUR FANTASTIC FANATIC  
SHAPES HALF THE POLICY WE'RE  
HOPING FOR, SHE'LL EARN THE IRE OF BOTH  
MAJOR POLITICAL PARTIES, THE UNIVERSE'S LARGEST  
CORPORATIONS, AND DOZENS OF SPECIAL INTEREST  
GROUPS, SO GETTING ELECTED AND STAYING ELECTED IS  
PARAMOUNT. THAT'S WHERE INVISIBILITY COMES IN.  
TURNING INVISIBLE IS THE LAST TRAIT A PROFESSIONAL  
POLITICIAN WOULD NORMALLY WANT--- AT LEAST, WHEN NO  
SCANDALS ARE BREWING---BUT THE FANTASTIC FORT'S  
RESIDENT MOTHER FIGURE IS ALSO ABLE TO PROJECT INVISIBLE  
FORCE FIELDS FOR OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE EFFECTS. THIS IS  
THE UNAPPARENT WHEELHOUSE OF MICHELE BACHMANN, WHO  
WIELDS THE NON-THREATS OF SAME-GENDER MARRIAGE, SCI-  
ENCE IN SCHOOLS, ABORTION-HAPPY MEDICAL  
PROFESSIONALS TO MANIPULATE LOW-INFORMATION VOTERS  
INTO RE-RE-INSTALLING HER AS THE SIXTH DISTRICT'S  
HOUSE REP SO AS TO FURTHER HER BAFFLING AGENDA.  
I'MAGINE IF THOSE POWERS WERE USED TO  
FURTHER THE FORCES OF GOOD!





[MN]Love Photo Collection: Twin Cities Pride, Gladys L-M. (Placement does not indicate relationship to editorial content on page.) Photo by Simon Scott Stromberg Photography

# The Secular Side of Marriage Equality

MINNESOTA ATHEISTS ADD NONSECTARIAN VIEWPOINTS  
TO A DEBATE OFTEN DOMINATED BY RELIGION.

MINNESOTA ATHEISTS has been fighting for decades to keep religion out of government, according to August Berkshire, the group's president.

When three same-sex couples were denied marriage licenses in Hennepin County for their sexual orientation, filed a lawsuit in March 2010 to strike down the Minnesota Defense of Marriage Act and then lost, the atheists took notice.

Once the couples appealed the decision of the Hennepin County District Court, Minnesota Atheists were able to jump in and help them out, said Berkshire. The group filed an amicus brief to bring their secular perspective to the discussion of marriage.

"We are going to get our arguments in there now to help them and do what we can to help, because this is an issue we've been supporting since the roots of our founding in 1984," said Berkshire, who was one of the founders of the Twin Cities chapter of American Atheists, which became Minnesota Atheists in 1991.

DOMA, which does not allow same-sex couples to get married, also prevents the out-of-state marriages of the couples in the case from being recognized in Minnesota, according to Berkshire.

The couples, who collectively form Marry Me Minnesota, a non-profit organization established in 2008 to prepare for the case, are seeking to abolish the state's "statutory ban on same-sex marriage," as the group's website states.

The amicus brief filed by Minnesota Athe-

ists supports the couples in their effort to get rid of the law and argues the unconstitutionality of DOMA, noting the law's theological basis.

The Minnesota State Constitution, with clauses guaranteeing freedom of conscience and freedom of religion, and the U.S. Constitution, which establishes freedom of religion in the First Amendment and equal protection for all in the Fourteenth Amendment, are violated by DOMA, according to the brief.

Berkshire said the religious roots of the law are grounded in "conservative Christian" views and leave those who have differing beliefs out in the cold.

"[DOMA is] a religious law that's not just a difference of opinion," Berkshire said. "It's a religious law that's harming people." The amicus brief gives several sectarian arguments why same-sex marriage is considered unacceptable by some religious institutions, but says there is no secular reason to bar same-sex couples from opportunities given to heterosexual couples.

"The government should not even be looking at religion," Berkshire said. "The government should only be looking at secular arguments and there are no good secular arguments against equality. There's no reason not to grant it."

The act was upheld by the trial court, citing a precedent set in a 1971 Minnesota Supreme Court case, *Baker v. Nelson*, which dismissed a constitutional challenge to the predecessor of DOMA and ruled that citizens do not have an innate right to get married, according to Berkshire.

But the issue of religious freedom was not considered in the *Baker* case, Berkshire said, so was insufficient reasoning to uphold DOMA, which, according to the brief, has significant "religious underpinnings."

Marshall Tanick, the lawyer who contributed to the brief, said one of the issues the appellate court should consider, which the trial court did not, is that the *Baker* case did not address freedom of religion.

"The 1970s *Baker* case is a significant hurdle to overcome," Tanick said.

Tanick said the purpose of a brief of *amicus curiae* is to point out arguments the court has not considered yet.

Peter Nikitas, a lawyer representing Marry Me Minnesota, said *amicus curiae* means "friend of the court" in Latin.

Nikitas said the briefs are a mechanism for people or groups to offer another angle for the judges to consider because the outcome of the case matters to them. This way they feel "they have done something about it." Nikitas underscored some of the points made by Minnesota Atheists in the brief, including the unconstitutionality of DOMA.

"[The plaintiffs] want to enjoy marriage like any John and Jane or Harry and Mary in the state and to prevent same sex couples from the benefits of marriage has no justification," stated Nikitas.

Nikitas added: "The government can't play favorites. When government starts playing favorites on the matter of religious beliefs, society falls apart, civil strife ensues and a lot of misery as a result."



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Plaintiffs Jessica Dykhuis and Lindzi Campbell, who were married August 2011 in Iowa, said they are thankful for the support of Minnesota Atheists.

"I think its great and an amicus brief is a huge deal for [Minnesota Atheists]," said Dykhuis, as briefs mean legal fees and take time to put together.

Campbell, a firefighter, and Dykhuis, a Doula, are raising a 10-year-old, who is also one of the plaintiffs in the case, and a 2-year-old in Duluth. They said it's a "pretty progressive" city, but they still are not able to enjoy the benefits that other heterosexual married couples do.

Campbell explained she is glad the case stoked debate and allowed her and her family to fight the marriage equality battle on two fronts, even if they are not successful in the suit. The couple has been part of the fight against the state constitutional amendment to define marriage between one man and one woman, which will appear on the ballot in November 2012.

"If nothing else, at least we have been able to create a conversation," Campbell said.

Doug Benson, the executive director of

Marry Me Minnesota and a plaintiff in the case, said it is difficult to predict the impact the Minnesota Atheists' brief will have on the outcome of the case.

"We're very happy and grateful to them for...filing their brief," Benson said. "We welcome and appreciate the perspective of the Minnesota Atheists."

Benson said he and his partner Duane Gajewski, who is also represented in the case, "have stood the test of time."

"We will always be married in our eyes," Benson said. "It would be a big thing to have the government finally recognize our relationship and afford us the same rights. It would be a good feeling."

Benson said fighting for marriage equality has been a huge part of his and Gajewski's relationship. He said it has been a long road, but even if the appellate court does not get rid of DOMA, they will keep going.

"When you're dealing with human beings, anything's possible," Benson said. "If we're successful, wonderful. If we're not, we'll go back and do it again...until we get the equality we deserve and demand."

Benson and Gajewski met in 1990, then

36 and 27, respectively, while working on Paul Wellstone's first run for office, Benson said. They were married in Vermont in 2000 (then called civil unions, now recognized as marriages by the

state), Ontario in 2003, and California in 2004, according to Benson. They currently live in Robbinsdale, Minnesota, with their basset hound, Simon.

Thomas Trisko and John Rittman of Minneapolis are the third couple represented in the case. They met in 1973, were registered as domestic partners in Minneapolis in 1991 and were married in Manitoba in 2005, according to the complaint.

Marry Me Minnesota filed the lawsuit May 11, 2010, according to the initial complaint. The District Court of the Fourth Judicial District dismissed the case, a decision that Marry Me Minnesota appealed.

The plaintiffs are now suing the State of Minnesota and Jill Alverson in her official capacity as Hennepin County Local Registrar, according to the appeal brief. Oral arguments will be heard in the Minnesota Court of Appeals Oct. 26. □



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## Appeals Court Tosses Gays in Military Lawsuit

The Associated Press reports that the 9th US Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco tossed out the lawsuit challenging the military's now-repealed ban on openly gay servicemembers. The decision dismisses last year's ruling by a California trial judge that the ban was unconstitutional. The court said, "This suit became moot when the repeal of section 654 took effect on Sept. 20th." The Log Cabin Republicans, who brought the case, had argued that an unconstitutional ruling was necessary in order to prevent a future congress or president from reinstating the ban.

### Obama Administration Blocks Full Severance for DADT Service Members

Politico reports that following the official repeal of DADT in September, the Obama administration is trying to block full severance pay for service members dismissed under the ban. The ACLU filed suit, seeking full compensation for 142 service members who only received partial severance when they were dismissed. The Justice Department argued that the Defense Secretary has sole discretion over separation pay and the courts have no ability to determine otherwise.

### Google Pulls 'Is My Son Gay?' Android App

CNET reports that, following complaints from consumers and gay rights groups, Google has pulled the "Is My Son Gay" app

from its Android Market. A company spokesman told CNET, "We remove apps that violate our policies." The app was commissioned by openly gay author Christophe de Baran to help promote his upcoming humorous novel, "Is My Son Gay." The app's developers released a statement saying, "This app was conceived with a playful approach."

### California Teen to Be Retried in Gay Student Murder

CNN reports that 17-year old Brandon McInerney, who is accused of killing gay classmate Lawrence King in 2008, will face a retrial. The Ventura County District Attorney's office announced the retrial in early October. McInerney's first trial was declared a mistrial in September after jurors said they were deadlocked. McInerney faces a first-degree murder

charge, a special allegation of use of a handgun, and a special circumstance allegation of lying in wait.

### Gay Congressman Announces Birth Of Son

Colorado Congressman, Democrat Jared Polis, and his partner, Marlon Reis, have announced the birth of their son Caspian Julius. Caspian was born in October, weighing 8 pounds 12 ounces. Polis becomes the only openly gay member of Congress to be a parent.

### British Passport Forms to Get Same-Sex Parents Option

The BBC reports that Britain's Home Office has announced UK passport forms are being updated to include options for same-sex parents. Instead of mother and father, passport applicants will see

"parent one" and "parent two." A change is also expected that includes the option for a gender free passport, allowing transgender people to opt-out of gender identification on their passport.

### Serial Killer May Be Stalking South African Gay Men

IOL News reports that South African police are investigating the possibility that a serial killer is targeting Johannesburg's gay community. Four gay men have been found bound and strangled to death in the last 10 months. Each of the victims was found tied up and strangled inside his home with no signs of forced entry. Police are urging gay men who share the victims' profiles to avoid letting strangers into their homes.

### Teacher Who Sent Student to Office for Homosexuality Remark Off Leave

NBC reports that high school teacher Kristopher Franks, who was placed on leave in October after disciplining a student who said homosexuality was wrong has returned to the classroom. Although the district has not commented on the case, freshman student Dakota Ary told reporters he was given an in-school suspension after telling a friend during German class that gay people were not allowed in Christianity. "I didn't say it to be rude to anyone."

### Gay Pastor Under Fire After Man Dies at His Home

The Royal Oak Daily Tribune reports that Rev. Mark Bidwell, pastor of the Metropolitan Community Church in Ferndale, Michigan has been removed from his volunteer position as a chaplain with the Ferndale Police dept. after an emergency call to his home in September. Police found 43 year old Steven Michael Fitch unresponsive after he and Bidwell allegedly injected themselves with crystal meth. Fitch was later pronounced dead. His official cause of death has not yet been determined and police say charges are unlikely in the case. □



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Seimone Augustus, Minnesota Lynx and MVP.  
Photo by Sophia Hantzes



Photo by Andy Lien

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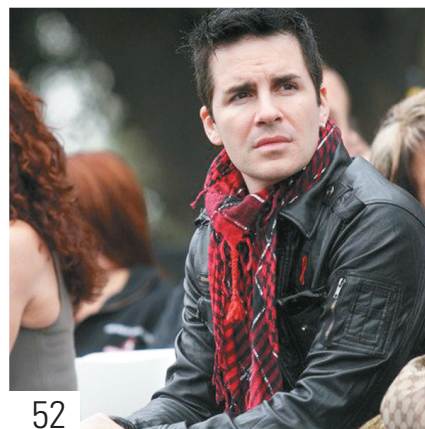


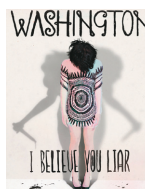
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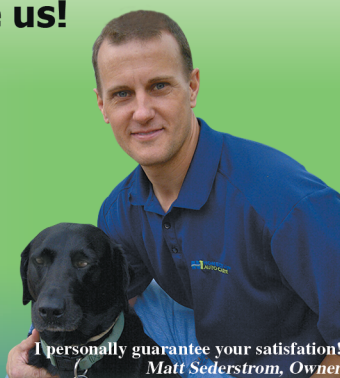
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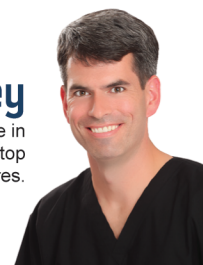
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## FROM THE EDITOR | Andy Lien

Halloween and Politics: Two subjects that our publication should be soaking in until our fingers get pruney. The season is changing, the costumes are coming out, and the politics are borderline gruesome—as usual.

I ran up to Duluth for a day this past week and landed smack dab at the right place at the right time. I wasn't supposed to be there—it was a whim. My friend Chrissy is a faculty member at the University of Minnesota in Duluth and I arrived at her office door on National Coming Out Day just in time for a special 6th Annual National Coming Out Day Luncheon. I joked that only I could manage to take off a day and head up to the North Shore and end up at a Coming Out Day event. Timing. It's all in the timing. And what a time it was. The ballroom was full of people observing a day that demands reverence and celebration. We listened to Deborah Petersen-Perlman (top, left) recount the history of National Coming Out Day. UMD student, Sovann Khong (middle), told us of bullying and being locked out of his own home as brutal accents of his own coming out story. Jake Caceres (top, right) regaled us with "The Caveman Song" which was a crowd-pleaser to say the least. Gary Anderson (lower, left) gave a moving update of what's going on with Duluth and Minnesota United for All Families and Angie Nichols (lower, right) ended the program, leaving us all with a sense of empowered togetherness.

Sitting there, I looked around at a group of people that was gathered for greatness. I thought about how these issues of bullying and civil rights are drawing us out in greater numbers. How, by being drawn out and united, we're actually making the world smaller. I certainly didn't feel like I was in a ballroom on a university campus 160 miles from where I'd started that morning. I could've walked into an event happening downtown and been hit with the same purpose, the same sense of accomplishment, and the same sense of unity.

Unity. As you read through this issue, think of the politics that are presented. We've got five of the more recognized parties speaking out in these pages—many of which talk about personal agency and rights. Oddly unifying. From the people of faith to the atheists against the marriage amendment, there are differences to be sure. But, there are so many points of unity. There is an abundance of ways to make this world smaller as we fight the same fight toward the same goal: Rights. Civil, human, equal.

Sometimes it's being in the right place at the right time...and sometimes it's simply walking out the door and looking around. Look around. See each other. Feel stronger.

As the only GLBT publication in the region, *Lavender* is there with you. We're unifying and presenting information to foster a continued discussion. I really mean it when I say that I'm committing *Lavender* to this conversation. Please hold me to it.

With thanks,

Andy 



Photos by Andy Lien



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## A Little Knowledge is a Very Dangerous Thing

In my youth, I had the idea that being “conservative” was a good trait since it meant looking carefully at data before taking action, while being “liberal” was also good because it meant looking beyond oneself to spread wealth or goods (conservatively) to those without them. I also thought that “intellectual” was a praiseworthy adjective because, as the Oxford English Dictionary defines such an individual, he or she is “a person with a highly developed intellect.” The first two are now polar opposites while the third has been turned—by the GOP in particular—into a pejorative.

Michele Bachmann was widely ridiculed for placing the Revolutionary battles of Lexington and Concord in New Hampshire rather than Massachusetts. That’s an extreme example of un-knowledge of American history, but I fault her more for not checking her facts than for her ignorance. Learned cluelessness turned dangerous, however, when Bachmann—on no clinical evidence—claimed that the HPV vaccine aimed at protecting young women from cervical cancer causes mental retardation.

Is it elitism to be accurate? Like most citizens today, Bachmann has

access to Google, but must she must also have a PR staff and a bevy of fact-checkers to vet any speech before she commits it to the airwaves. A snob is anyone overweening and proud of something he or she has that others don’t, and now includes being boastful of immense stupidity as well as possessing a string of advanced degrees. For some reason the GOP has decided that ignorance is a point of pride.

Rick Perry’s self-deprecation seems to be aimed at enticing other good ole boys to vote for him, and recently bragged that he was in the top ten of a high school class of 13. Personally, I want a president to be smarter and better informed than I am, or who isn’t afraid to consult advisers and experts who are. Anti-intellectualism doesn’t even jibe with the Biblical description of Man’s relation to the Deity. I can find no scriptural verse declaring “...and Man was created in God’s image – dumber than a sack of hammers.”

There have always been members of society who go about with a “Hey nonny, nonny,” and babbling forth whatever comes into their heads. Back in the day they were considered “village idiots.” Now, they’re hailed as “candidates.” □



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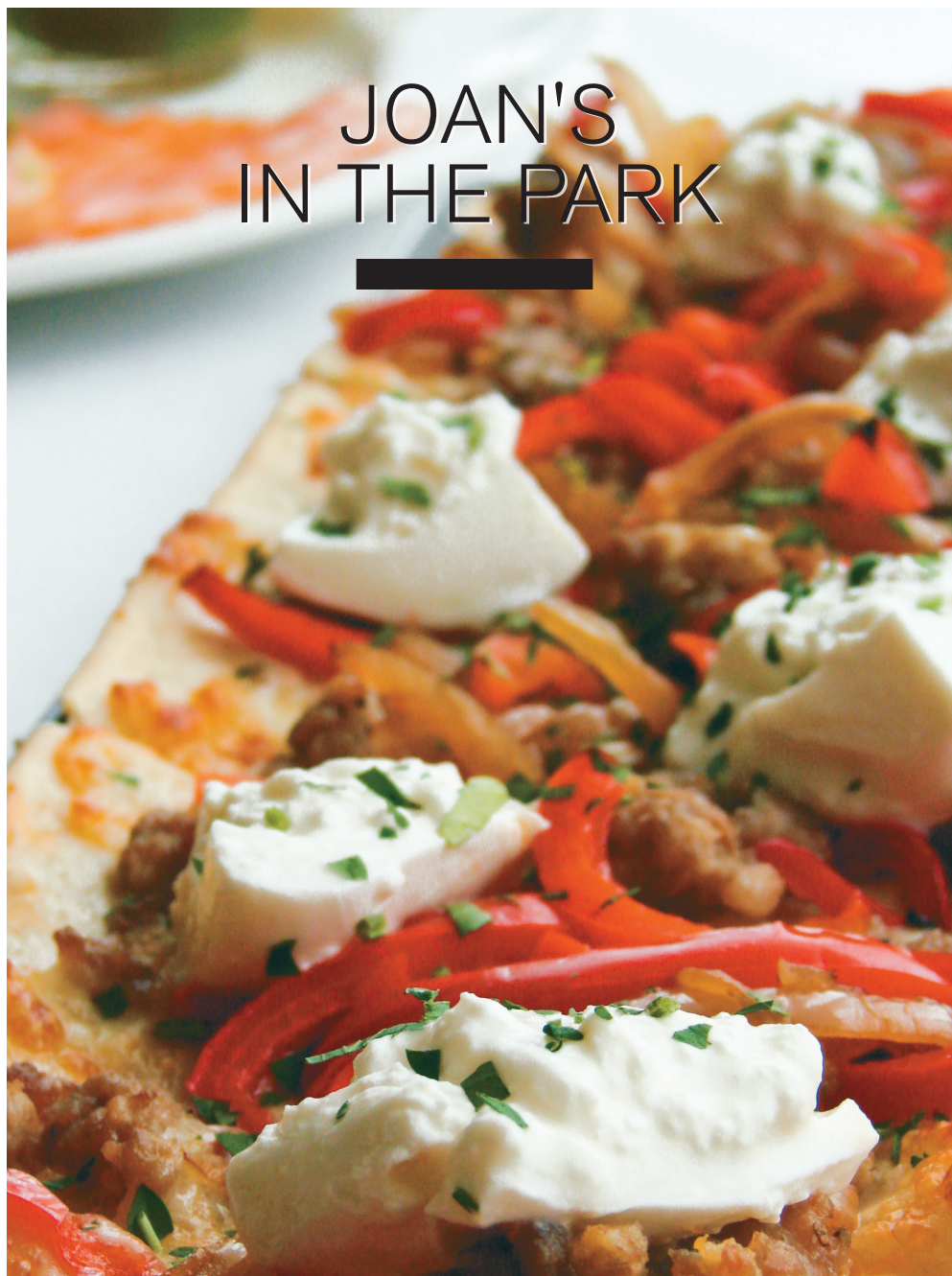
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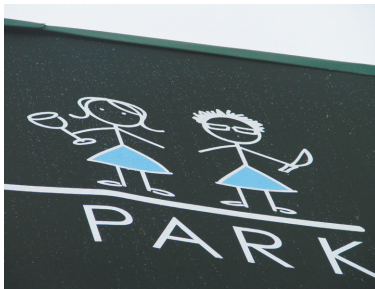
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## JOAN'S IN THE PARK



Joan's in the Park, the cozy new neighborhood bistro in Saint Paul's Highland Park is full of laughter, clinking glasses and the occasional canoodle. It could be any Saturday dinner service, except this isn't Saturday night, and they aren't even open. Instead the restaurant is filled with the blended family brought together by Joan Schmitt and her partner Susan Dunlop. Their children and their counterparts all range between





Flatbread made with housemade sweet sausage (left) and the logo of a loving couple (above). Apparently, Joan's got the wine glass and Susan is the one with the knife. Photos by Andy Lien

23 and 30 years of age, easy with laughter and gentle teasing. These kids could be on a poster for rainbow families, safely proving that a gay parent has the same likelihood of raising well-adjusted, productive children as any parent. Instead, they're proving what a combined family passion for good food and great service can bring to a quiet corner in a snoozy little neighborhood.

When the women, both restaurant vets, knew they were ready to open their own place, they scoured locations. They knew they'd found their new home when they discovered the former pizzeria for sale in the very neighborhood that Joan had grown up in. They noted that while they've only been open for a short amount of time, they are already developing regulars. They noted one woman who adores the crab cakes and a welcome number of gay couples as well. Located at the corner of Snelling and Bayard, they've transformed the space from tacky utilitarian, to an open and serene with soft lighting.

Joan and Susan met when they were both working for Morton's Steakhouse in Florida. Dan, one of Joan's sons remembered he was talking to her on the phone. She put him on hold – for over two hours. After swallowing the indignation of his own mother not taking his call, the immediate question was a sly, "Who did you meet?"

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Clockwise: Beef carpaccio and prime NY strip; Susan and Joan's family affair; and house-cured salmon with parsley garlic sauce on ciabatta toasts.  
Photos by Andy Lien

When asked what their experience was like, being out and working in the hospitality industry, Susan thinks a long time before responding, "I was always accepted, but it wasn't until I worked at Capital Grille that it was really embraced, that I began to be an asset. Morton's wouldn't do anything for Pride."

Her daughter Lindsay, a bubbly 23 year old chimed in, "We *love* Pride. It's our favorite time of year! Well, that and Halloween." The family is already contemplating a float for next year's parade. When asked about what her experience has been she summed it up best by saying, "*Everyone* loves someone who is gay. It's just weird to be anti. We're just... normal."

"I have friends who grew up not knowing any gay people," adds Mark, Joan's son. "Now I have friends, these two guys who took a cab all the way out to where they were at Pride just to get a hug." It's clear that the house that Joan and Susan

have built is where all the kids and their friends can find solace. When I point that out, they responded that Thanksgiving usually involves all sorts of holiday orphans gathered around their table. "You want to join us?"

There was talk of having Thanksgiving at the restaurant. That certainly would make the hosting easy, not to mention the ample amount of wine that would pair beautifully with a turkey.

The room's easy elegance works as well for a celebration as it does for a casual night in jeans. "It's not fine dining," explained Joan. "It's redefined fine dining, *not* hoity-toity. We wanted to be approachable."

"A real neighborhood restaurant," added Susan. "That's why we buy locally when we can. Our seafood comes from Coastal Seafood and our bread, the only bread we don't make in house, is the egg and onion bread that arrives first on your table. It's from Rosemark's [Bakery] right





up the street.”

Susan is the chef while Joan works the front of house. The food is classic preparations with straightforward flavors. With all of their steakhouse experience it should come as no surprise that the filet's are tender as the morning and beef carpaccio is simply adorned with arugula, truffle oil with a few salty wisps of Parmesan cheese. Susan explains it's her Italian heritage that's draws her to using the tender, sweet roasted red peppers in so many dishes that enhance the sweet onion jam served on the New York Strip and the sweet Italian sausage studded flatbread.

From Caesar salads to in-house cured lox to the tiramisu finish, the food isn't trying to be haute cuisine, each dish is familiar with carefully chosen components and assembled with love, which could also be said for this endearing family. □



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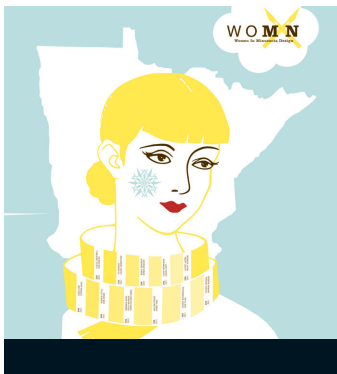


# KINSEN

## Kinsen: More than new noodles.

Asia seems to divide tourists into two categories. There are those who come back to the United States thankful that their restaurants feature toned-down, Americanized versions of Asian cuisine. Then there are those for whom American Asian restaurants are forever ruined after eating the real thing. Sadly, the real thing is very hard to find anywhere else but Asia. Even U.S. restaurants that attempt authenticity can't get all of the proper ingredients, and even if they could, they'd likely have problems attracting enough customers. But if you crave real Thai, Vietnamese, Japanese or Chinese noodle dishes, Kinsen dishes up a worthy version at a reasonable price. ➔





## COLLEGE OF VISUAL ARTS LEADERS OF DESIGN SERIES PRESENTS: WOMN: WOMEN IN MINNESOTA DESIGN

The College of Visual Arts (CVA) has announced its Fall 2011 Leaders of Design Series, celebrating women who have helped put Minnesota on the map with graphic design that is conceptual, meaningful, inspiring, hard working, and powerful. The series includes a moderated panel discussion and exhibition. Twenty-three industry-leading women were selected to exhibit their design work at the CVA Gallery from October 27 through November 13. Criteria for selection included leadership, innovation, influence, accolades for design excellence, and longevity in Minnesota. Featured Designers are: Leslee Carsewell, Sue Crolick, Jo Davison, Laurie DeMartino, Nancy Gardner, Minda Gralnek, Linda Henneman, Susan Hopp, Laurie Jacobi, Haley Johnson, Katie Kirk, Cynthia Knox, Monica Little, Deb Miner, Miranda Moss, Kelly Munson, Sarah Nelson Forss, Kolean Pitner, Nancy Rice, Connie Soteropulos, Jane Tilka, Cheryl Watson, Sharon Werner. The College of Visual Arts is located at 344 Summit Avenue, St. Paul. Visit [www.cva.edu](http://www.cva.edu), [facebook.com/cva.edu](https://facebook.com/cva.edu), [twitter.com/cva\\_edu](https://twitter.com/cva_edu).



Photo by Gayla Ellis

## POWDERHORN EMPTY BOWLS HELPS FEED NEIGHBORHOOD HUNGRY

November 4 will mark the 5th Powderhorn Empty Bowls (PEB), held annually on the first Friday in November at the Park. Local potters—professionals, kids' programs, and college departments—donate hand-made bowls, local volunteers cook soup, and bake fresh bread. Neighbors come together, select a bowl, have a meal of soup and bread, and make a donation. The net income from the event is donated to help feed the hungry in the Powderhorn neighborhood. Last year even proceeds supported the food shelf at the Division of Indian Work, Sisters Camelot, and Youth Farm and Market. Originally started by Powderhorn Park Neighborhood Association as a fundraiser to end hunger, it is now also an important community-building event. Last year 1,455 people attended; there were over 1,325 bowls; PEB grossed around \$22,000. For more information call (612) 722-4817 or visit <http://ppna.org>



Photo by Sophia Hantzes

## AWEN BRIEM RAN HER FIRST MARATHON RECENTLY TO SUPPORT DAFEET BULLYING CAMPAIGN

She was cheered by 130 supporters who lined the route markers at 8, 15, and 21 miles, sporting T-shirts with the legend, "We support Safe Schools for ALL Youth," and "We've got Your Back." DaFeet Bullying Campaign began in the hours of solitude that Briem's running provided. Briem is a survivor of school bullying, and she and her partner are the parents of a school-aged son. She became active when she simultaneously learned of the youth suicides in the Anoka-Hennepin school district and that every one of her LGBTQ friends from high school, who were also bullied, was no longer alive. "We lost them to suicide, hate crimes resulting in homicide, and complications of AIDS," she shared. A video crew filmed Briem's run as part of an upcoming video campaign targeting youth, adults and state legislators.



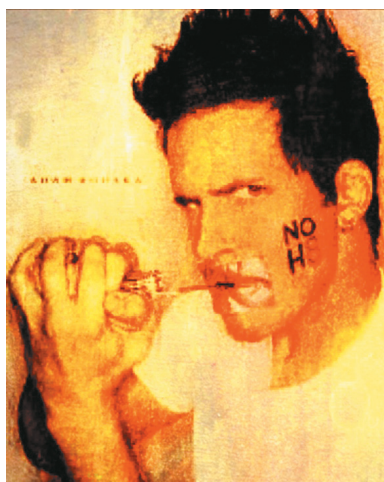
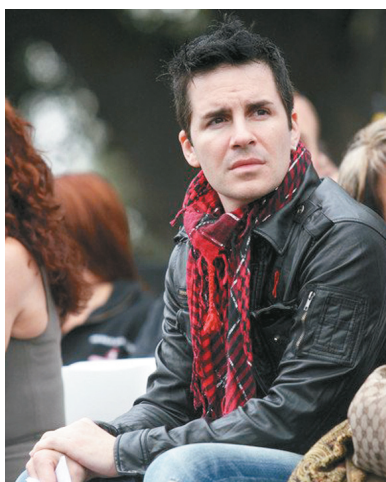
Photo by Sophia Hantzes

## LOCAL CATHOLICS VIDEO SERIES SUPPORTS MARRIAGE EQUALITY

Catholics for Marriage Equality, a five-video series featuring local lesbian and gay Catholics sharing stories of faith, family and marriage, premiered recently in Minneapolis, offering a response to efforts to amend the Minnesota State Constitution to ban civil marriage for same-sex couples and to Archbishop John Nienstedt of the Archdiocese of St. Paul-Minneapolis, who last fall distributed the DVD Preserving Marriage in Minnesota to more than 400,000 Catholic households. Nienstedt asserts, "At best, so-called same-sex marriage is an untested social experiment, and at worst, it poses a dangerous risk with potentially far-reaching consequences." Director Mary Kay Orman stated, "Our hope is that those who view our video series will prayerfully reflect upon the negative impact of the proposed 'marriage amendment' and commit to voting against it in November 2012."

Pictured left: Filmmaker Aleshia Mueller





Hal Sparks. Photos Courtesy of Hal Sparks.com

# HAL SPARKS

## Straight Ally Extraordinaire!

HAL SPARKS is beloved by GLBT audiences for his time on *Queer As Folk*. He also enjoys an illustrious career as one of the most intelligent and attractive comedians around. Every Wednesday morning he can be heard on am950 as Stephanie Miller's cohost on her extravagantly comic national morning show. It's called *Hump Days With Hal*. I recently spoke with 42-year old Sparks about his insights as a straight ally to the GLBTcommunity.

**JT:** There are very few other straight men, other than perhaps your Stephanie Miller show cohort, John Fugelsang, who express pro gay views as frequently as you on a national platform. You remind me of a protective dad or big brother. How did that get shaped in your character?

**HS:** A couple of things: when I was growing up in Kentucky there were four kids I used to hang out with all the time - like four running buddies, four other boys. Later in my life I would find out the two of them were gay. And I would find out later what they went through. One of them, the

family still doesn't know.

Several times over the course of my life I found out that some people I respect and love dearly finally found the strength to come out of the closet to me. It didn't change my feelings for them at all. And I started to really feel the fact that they're in this emotional straitjacket, whenever they just want to live their life in a normal way. And why do I care about this? My response is how can you not? It's more of an alien thought to me that people wouldn't want gay people to have equal rights and that's why I'm comfortable with it. It's maddening to me that the alternative exists - like we're in some bizarre-o world where you literally have Freedom Works running the Tea Party about individual liberty and small government. These folks are trying to institute the most Draconian antigay laws and keep the ones that still are on the books. It's up and down, black and white.

For me it's a matter of fairness. It's a matter of logic. It's a matter of love and friendship.

**JT:** I'm a decade older than you and when I was growing up if you were a straight man who didn't have any problem with gays you

still kept silent about gay rights. In many cases, it could actually stigmatize you, just being a vocal ally. But for your generation, by and large, it's just not much of an issue. In fact, what's throwing off a lot of people, middle-aged and beyond, is that there are so many straight white men, unmistakably masculine, like yourself, who don't have an issue with it and will say so.

**HS:** We went through a gender comfort transition in this country. Call it women's lib, the feminist movement, Women's Lib in America in the '80s - openness about women's value in arenas other than childrearing and motherhood. A woman being a woman is okay. A man being a man is okay and anything in between, personality-wise, is therefore, okay and that makes it easier to be who you are.

We became much closer to that level than our older compatriots. I think the fear of the feminine has a lot to do with, specifically, male homosexuality, particularly in the older generation. They have this view that feminine is weak and of gay men as feminine. Even though that's not the case, that's the mentality.



So my generation became comfortable with all the elements of female femininity. We weren't hostile to it; therefore, we didn't really perceive gay men in that regard and therefore nothing to be feared.

I also think we went through a level of introspection as a generation, where you look inside yourself. You really gave a good look. You didn't have to be afraid of your inner self and that you were gonna stumble over the fact that you were straight when you thought you were gay or you were gay when you thought you were straight. You paid attention to your own life. Your own internalized being. You could come out and admit it. You could ask those questions of yourself.

Whereas the previous generation was afraid to ask those questions in the first place for fear of the 'wrong' answer. What if you did find out you were gay and then all of the sudden you have to answer to that thought form, and now there's no support for it. So the fear was rooted in the fact that there was no social structure to protect them. And there

was a constant judgment that women are somehow weaker and, therefore, anything feminine is weak. Men who are perceived as feminine are weaker than men who are not. Therefore, if you are gay or feminine, you are weak. So being straight is your only point of value as a man

Also, psychologically, acceptance of gay people [marks] the maturing of any society.

**JT:** Americans may be getting savvy about how sex hysteria is used to undermine candidates. There also seems to be a wider awareness that right-wingers are largely more erotophobic than those to their left. It's interesting how Republicans will forgive Senator David 'Diaper Boy' Vitter and ultimately want Senator Larry Craig and Rep. Mark Foley, two men with a clearly homosexual side, out of the way.

**HS:** This is very frustrating to the Right Wing. The Left is not run on sexual morals. Where our moralism takes its stands are on

issues that matter: war, poverty, things that quite frankly we can do something about. But the war that is waged on a moral front from the right is largely sexual and largely about gender control, meaning that man is the leader of the household. Women have to be subservient. Gay is a choice. Your behavior is *their* business.

The problem with that is that you are automatically setting yourself up for a level of scrutiny that is inhuman because you don't allow for reality to set in. And when it does catch up it shows their hypocrisy. They have to hide it. In hiding who you are, it deviates you more from your normal track of action, your normal track of being. That's why they become crazy to some degree. It's bound up in who they are. □

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## In the Name of the Father, etc.

MY MOTHER told me today that she secretly baptized my two nieces. We were having lunch and I was riffing on the fact that the kids are being raised Buddhist, and, just to mess with my mother, I suggested that the kids won't be joining us in heaven because they haven't been baptized.

"Oh, we don't have to worry about that," she said, taking a sip of her cocktail. "I baptized them."

I put down my fork and stared at her in shock.

"You took them to church?" I asked in true surprise. My mother hasn't been to church since my confirmation. And even then she wasn't fully engaged. She spent most of the service arguing with my father over who in the congregation was having an affair.

"No, I did it myself," she said. "I baptized them in the sunroom." The sunroom was my mother's sanctuary in my childhood home. We were rarely allowed in it when I was a kid, and I always imagined her using it as the base for her dark, covert operations. Never in my wildest fantasies did I imagine her doing God's work in this room.

"You baptized them yourself? Is that even legal?" I asked. "I mean will God recognize

such a crackpot scheme?"

"Well, He'd better," she said. And, frankly, if God knows what's good for Him, He'd best not mess with my mother when she's feeling officious. She'll kick His ass. "Those kids are going to heaven."

My parents were outraged when they learned that my brother and sister-in-law had no intention of baptizing the kids. My sister-in-law is Thai and so the kids are Buddhist, mainly, I suspect, because they live near a Buddhist temple that produces a fantastic brunch every Sunday for congregants. Religion has nothing to do with it. But religion has nothing to do with my parents' objections, either. They're both merrily agnostic and think people who buy into organized religion are morons.

"OK, so how do you baptize someone without a preacher guy around?" I asked.

"Oh, it's easy," she said. "You just say 'You're baptized in the name of the Father, the Son....' and, well, you know the rest."

"Did you trail off like that when you were baptizing them? Because I don't think it's official if you can't name all the various holy players."

She dismissed me with the wave of her hand. "Oh, for God's sakes. It's not like we're

Catholic. You don't need all those formalities if you're Protestant."

"Does Dad know about this?" I asked.

"Of course he does. It's one of the rare things we have agreed on in the past 45 years. Although we did have a fight when I told him what I sprinkled on them when I did the baptism."

"Let me guess....does it include the word vodka in the name?"

"Vodka tonic. So there *was* water involved. Tonic is a type of water, right?"

"Why do you even care about this?" I asked. "You don't believe in God. Why do you care that they're not baptized?"

"Well, what if we're wrong? What if there is a God? Better to hedge our bets."

And, in a nutshell, I feel the same way about long-term, romantic relationships. They don't make sense. The concept of two carbon-based creatures making some type of mystical connection that obliges them to walk hand-in-hand until death goes against everything I know about science and nature. And yet, what if I'm wrong? So, I keep trying—and blessing them with vodka-tonics—and hoping for the best. Faith is a powerful thing. ■



**Dear Ms. Behavior:**

My partner and I have been together for nearly 11 years. Now that graduate school and quandaries over career paths are over, at 40 we both feel financially and emotionally secure enough to become parents. We have discussed this extensively over the past five years, and feel as though we would be great fathers. There is, however, one problem: Greg wants to have biological children, even though none of our women friends are willing to serve as a mother, and I want to adopt. My reason is that the bonds that should exist between two people raising children—and they do exist between Greg and me—are absent from the relationships we have with our women friends. Given this, it seems, biology limits our options.

Enter Evelyn. She and I grew up together and came out together nearly 25 years ago. She and her partner of eight years now live in the Midwest and would love to become mothers. Recently, Evelyn and I spent three days together, during which time she asked if I would be willing to serve as sperm donor to her and her partner. My role would go no further than that, and Evelyn and her partner would be the parents. Evelyn asked me because I am the only man that she and her partner know well enough to ask and because, after spending nearly \$15,000 at a fertility clinic last year, Evelyn eventually miscarried. Economically they could not go through the experience again. I told her I would think over all of this.

Ms. Behavior, I have no emotional or philosophical problem with becoming a donor;

however, Greg is livid that I would consider Evelyn's proposition at all. If he and I cannot become biological parents, he reasons, then why should I help anyone else become one? Essentially he has forbidden me to give the matter any more thought, which I think is vindictive. As a social worker, I realize that there are plenty of children in the world who could use parents like Greg and me. But why should this preclude two very loving and capable women from becoming parents as well? I want to do the right thing. Could you lend some advice? Thank you.

--ANONYMOUS

**Dear Anonymous:**

You're dealing with three separate issues here: 1) Whether or not you and Greg will ever reach an agreement about adopting vs. having biological children; 2) Whether you can donate sperm to your friend Evelyn even if Greg doesn't want you to; and 3) Why your boyfriend is so stingy.

Starting with the first one, you haven't mentioned the surrogacy option – perhaps because the going rate through an agency seems to hover near \$100,000 in most places. Does Greg think he'll just find a sweet and compliant Good Samaritan volunteer, who'll agree to be impregnated, carry the baby, and then just hand (or toss) the baby over to him? It's important to resolve this issue; if you don't, you risk stalling out and doing nothing, even though you both want children. Spend some time talking with a couples' counselor until you sort it out (or

become willing to let it go), rather than letting it become a missed opportunity.

It sounds like Greg's primary purpose for withholding your sperm is spite, rather than any philosophical belief about fatherhood. Given that spite is bad and wrong, you might remind Greg about Karma, if only because the vindictive can occasionally be moved to a change of heart out of fear of payback from the Universe.

(Ms. Behavior would like to point out that most men have no trouble flushing their semen down the toilet in a wadded up tissue or spewing onto those non-disposable Fieldcrest towels or any old sock that's on the floor, but if you ask them to borrow some, it suddenly becomes too valuable to part with.)

The decision about whether to help your friends is ultimately yours, but if you and Greg intend to stay together and you can't get Greg to change his point of view, you may need to forego donation. If you were to inseminate Evelyn despite Greg's protests, in addition to the strain on your relationship with Greg, he'd probably shun Evelyn and the baby, which would compromise that friendship too. And while Ms. Behavior has heard of men donating sperm secretly, she does not recommend harboring such secrets within the context of an intimate relationship. (Never mind the fact that the kid could end up looking exactly like you, which would be difficult to explain.) So, unless you can convince Greg that sharing is beautiful, Ms. Behavior would advise you to keep your cherished spunk to yourself. □

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# Wanda's Halloween Mask Contest

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## Jungle Wanda



## Politician Wanda







## [MN]Love

ORGANIZATIONS, CORPORATIONS, clubs and individuals across Minnesota and beyond have begun the battle to defeat next year's statewide vote to constitutionally ban same-sex marriage. One of the more clever, creative groups lending their hand to the cause is [MN]Love.

According to [MN]Love field director Brandon Gil,

*[MN]Love is a platform for people to engage in a statewide dialogue about marriage equality. Whether it be through our "Marriage is..." photo shoot campaign or our letter-writing campaign, we seek to connect Minnesotans to other Minnesotans so that we can defeat the 2012 ballot initiative that seeks to insert hate into our state Constitution. We have many tricks up our sleeves between now and November 2012, so stay tuned! =*

The group's photo campaign—artistry by Simon Scott Stromberg—has brought them all over the state, including many of Minnesota's annual pride festivals. Says Brandon,

*In light of the upcoming ballot initiative that narrowly defines marriage as between one man and one woman, we introduced our "Marriage is..." photo shoot campaign. This campaign is not meant to redefine marriage, but instead is a chance for Minnesotans, of all backgrounds, to visually depict what marriage means to them. We encourage people to share these photos with others in an effort to have a continuous and expansive dialogue about why marriage equality matters.*

Anyone interested in participating in or learning more about their photo and letter campaigns can contact [MN]Love's outreach director, Betsy Narr, at [bnarr@mn-love.org](mailto:bnarr@mn-love.org). ■

[MN]Love Photo Collection: Moorhead Pride, Fred O. and Paul H. (top); [MN]Love Fundraiser, Bri T. (middle); and Duluth Pride, Thomas R. (lower).  
Photos by Simon Scott Stromberg Photography





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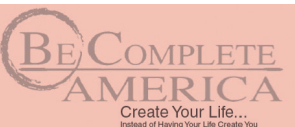
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Estimates aren't an exact science, but both Cronje and Ertl have years and years of experience with a wide variety of jobs, and they know when to expect the unexpected. If they forget to include costs on their estimate, the duo would rather pay the difference themselves rather than stick their customer with the extra charge. It's part of their overall business philosophy, which values honesty and craftsmanship over a quick buck, as Ertl explains. He adds, "Rather than just do a job and get out, we try to build relationships. I know Vince has had some of his customers his whole career, and I have too, for 10-12 years."

The duo works throughout the Twin Cities on both commercial and residential properties of any era. To schedule an appointment, contact ProHome Renovating through their website at prohomeerenovating.com, or by calling 612-205-



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# A Bill for an Act

*1.2 proposing an amendment to the Minnesota Constitution; adding a section to 1.3 article XIII; forbidding marriage between individuals of differing races.*

A bill being considered for the 2012 Minnesota Legislature will ask members to consider a constitutional amendment banning interracial marriage. Supporters of the bill believe it is time to address this issue as part of a larger social policy agenda. One member was quoted as saying that, "Interracial marriage is against the laws of god, it isn't decent or natural, and we should not be exposing our children to such things." Another member suggested that there is "no parallel to the gay marriage amendment discussed in the 2011 session," and the two should not be compared.

Just kidding. Pullin' your leg. There is no amendment being proposed to ban interracial marriage. But, what if there were? Do you think the religious community would support such an amendment? Would there be a reaction from the general public? What would be the reaction from the African American community? Would there be outrage? Would there be a total rejection of the *very* idea of denying someone access to a civil contract because of their skin color....a factor that is totally out of their control? Would we as citizens allow our elected officials to bait us into racial discord simply to distract us from the larger and far more important issues we are facing?

*75% of US adults favor marriage or domestic partnerships/civil unions for gay and lesbian couples. (Harris Interactive)*

When all is said and done, the argument is really *not* about whether homosexuality is a sin or not, whether gay marriage is an attack on the sanctity and tradition of marriage, about protecting our youth from recruitment, or whether any particular denom-

ination has the right to refuse to perform a wedding ceremony between two adult individuals. It is about denying a legal adult access to a *civil contract*. It is about discrimination. It's that simple.

My point?

We should not just simply ignore the absurdity of the kind of ridiculousness that is being presented as fact by those who support a constitutional amendment banning gay marriage in Minnesota. There needs to be a demand for a rejection of the propagation of this kind of myth and misinformation. No other minority community would sit by idly and accept this kind of ludicrousness. But, for some reason we, as a community, are expected to take in on the chin. As legal, competent and taxpaying citizens we are expected to accept being denied our right to access a *civil contract*. And, do you know why? Because the people who perpetuate this nonsense believe we are too scared to publicly identify ourselves to protest of their ideas. Well, we are not. It is time to demonstrate our resolve by showing ourselves in larger numbers in public rallies, by boycotting businesses that only value our dollars and not us, and by making sure that elected officials know that there are political consequences when they support such nonsense.

*Happiness is so hard to find for people, so they find someone who makes them happy and we want to take that away? We say you can be together but you can't marry them? That's wrong and I don't agree with it."* MN Rep. John Kriesel, R-Cottage Grove

Please, don't allow anyone to insult your intelligence by telling you that as a GLBTQ person, you have access to the same marriage rights as everyone else, and that to achieve them you just have to marry someone of the opposite sex. That is like telling an African American that they can sit at the

front of the bus if they just change their skin color. Yes, it is. Of course, it sounds like an absurd notion because an individual who is African American cannot change their skin color. Guess what, I cannot change my sexuality either. Believe me, it is not a choice. I cannot truly think of anyone who would *choose* to be gay. Please don't misunderstand, I have learned to be proud of who I am and I have no regrets. (The majority of my friends who identify as GLBTQ feel the same way; Proud, self respecting, and out.) But, one's sexuality is not a choice.

*"If it is true that sexual orientation is innate, that it is God given, then what does that mean to the moral force of your argument (?).... How many more gay people must god create before we ask ourselves whether or not god actually wants them around (?) .....If we pass this, if we put it on the ballot, if this becomes part of our constitution, history will judge us all very, very harshly. ...I think ...on this issue.. there will be some justifiable shame."* Rep Steve Simon, DLF-Hopkins-St. Louis Park in committee discussion with fellow legislators in the 2011 Legislative session.

And, finally, I do not argue with the right of any religious institution to deny performing a wedding ceremony for same sex couples. That is the right of the denomination. However, that same religious institution or denomination does not have the right to tell which civil contracts I have a right to access and which I do not. Accessing a legal, civil contract is a civil right, not a religious one.

I urge voters to remember this when they go to the polls next fall. In the meantime, members of the GLBTQ community (and our friends, families and allies) need to be vocal and visible, we need to communicate with our elected officials about the impact of this unnecessary proposed constitutional amendment. ■



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# Night of the Witch

IT SCARES the leaves off the trees, asks us to carve its image and play its tease; entices with tricks and treats—in wrappers and in human sweets. Instills fear in many, vanity in some, and for others? Drinks them dumb. It's Halloween, baby!

As Halloween Night approaches and we decide whether to haunt the town or stay safe at home, as our Jack-o-Lanterns patiently watch, we face one of our favorite choices of the year: What costume will I wear? One that makes me laugh? Frightens me? Makes me sexy? What mask will I hide behind this year to become who I want to be?

The costume choice is a telling one. It identifies what's important to us. Humor? Thrill? Vanity? It's how we choose to disguise ourselves that tells more about who we are than at any other time in the year—especially true for those outfits we're dying to show off: in these costumes, the persona transforms—we move beyond the physical alteration and actually play our characters.

It's brilliant, completely unexpected, and unbearable more than one day a year: people living their fantasies out loud en masse, showing us the truth inside-out: hiding what's on display 364 days a year—the exterior—in order to not only exhibit, but to scream, the interior.

Halloween is my favorite time of year. I enjoy the mature, adult things preceding—apple orchards, pumpkin patches, corn mazes,

cozy parties. But as that night approaches, my interest evolves. I first become more daring, more thrill-seeking: The parties, mazes, hayrides, and homes switch from quaint to haunted. As Halloween nears, I pursue my fantasies: I choose my costume—the one that reflects myself most currently, most accurately, however embarrassingly. Year after year, my choice showcases how insecure, vain, and sometimes desperate for romantic attention, I am. I fit in with the stereotypical twenty-somethings: lots of bare skin, nothing left to the imagination—except, perhaps, who I am those other 364 days a year.

On Halloween, we remove our inhibitions. We do this because our masks protect us. They allow candor in times we'd otherwise shy away; they allow more crass decision-making when we'd otherwise have better judgment. Our masks, those things that hide us, in essence, allow us to become exactly who we are.

Drag performers live their fantasies every weekend this way. When they're on the stage, dripping in glamour and absorbing the limelight, they're showing us a side of themselves we'd otherwise never see were we to know them only during the day. Under their dresses their hearts beat with excitement, with thrill, with fantasy. They've mastered the art of Halloween, because they so thoughtfully choose each night the costume that best reflects that part of who they are.

Think back to your favorite costume. Did you feel differently when you wore it? Did you act differently? Was it completely socially acceptable? Would you like to feel and act this way every day of the year?

As human beings, we have this wonderful propensity to hide ourselves from everyone else. During most of the year, we are mostly ourselves. Attached to the socially acceptable, yes. Obsessed with fitting in, yes. Worrying about and working toward all the things we only kinda-sorta want, yes. But mostly ourselves. The rest of us—the parts of us that are socially unacceptable—we hide from the world most of the time. We do this because we are social animals, and to survive socially, we must conform to something of a social order.

So we bottle it up all year long, that part that would get us in trouble were we to show it off. We hide from ourselves until it's safe to come out and play. Until, for the regulars, it's time to take the stage for a night lip-syncing and entertaining. Or, for others, for at least one night of the year, to show off our creativity, our passions, our insecurities.

In this way, we all practice a little witchcraft on Halloween; we show our ability to vanish behind ourselves.

*Stay safe this Halloween, and don't do anything stupid. I want you around to read my next column!* ▣

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